

T H O U G H T S  
CONCERNING THE  
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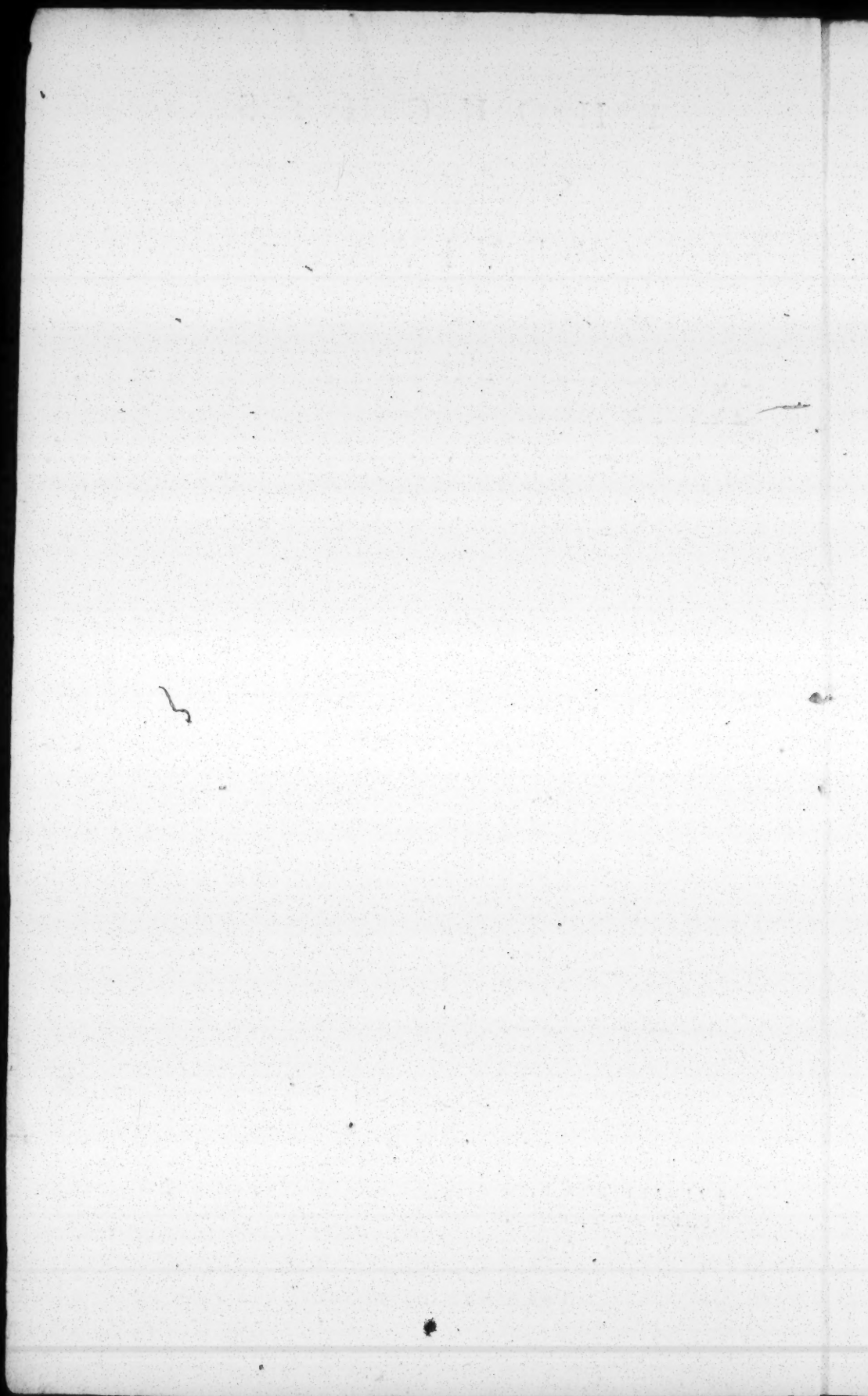
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By JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
Pastor of the Church of CHRIST at NORTHAMPTON,  
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ABRIDGED  
By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.  
LATE FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

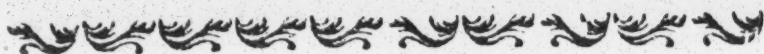
"Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in  
the desert a high-way for our God." Isa. xl. 3.

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THOUGHTS  
CONCERNING THE REVIVAL OF  
RELIGION IN  
New-England.



PART I.

Shewing that the work that has of late been going on  
in this land, is a glorious work of GOD.

THE Error of those who have had ill thoughts  
of the great religious operation on the minds of  
men, that has been of late in New-England, seems  
fundamentally to lie in three things ; First, In judging  
of this work *a priori*. Secondly, In not taking the  
Holy Scriptures as a whole rule whereby to judge of  
such operations. Thirdly, In not justly distinguishing  
the good from the bad.

1. They have greatly erred in the way in which they  
have gone about to try this work, whether it be a work  
of the Spirit of GOD, or no, viz. in judging of it *a*  
*priori* ; from the way that it began, the instruments  
that have been employed, and the methods that have been  
taken in carrying it on. Whereas, if we duly consider,  
such a work is not to be judged of *a priori*, but *a pos-*  
teriori :

#### 4 . THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL

*teriori*: We are to observe the effect wrought; and if upon examination, it be found agreeable to the Word of God, we are bound, without more ado, to rest in it as God's work; and shall be rebuked for our arrogance, if we refuse so to do till God shall explain to us how he has brought this effect to pass, or why he has made use of such and such means in doing it. Those texts are enough to cause us with trembling to forbear such a way of judging of a work of God's Spirit, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" Isa. xl. 13, 14. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." John iii. 8. We hear the sound, we perceive the effect, and from thence we judge that the wind does indeed blow; without waiting, first to be satisfied what should be the cause of its blowing from such a part of the heavens, and how it comes to pass that it should blow in such a manner, at such a time. To judge *a priori*, is a wrong way of judging of any of the works of God. We are not to resolve that we will first be satisfied how God brought this or the other effect to pass, and why he made it thus, or why it has pleased him to use such and such means, before we will acknowledge his work. This is too much for the *clay* to take upon it with respect to the *potter*. "God gives no account of his matters: His judgments are a great deep: He hath his way in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known. And who shall teach God knowledge, or enjoin him his way, or say unto him, What doest thou? We know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so we know not the works of God who maketh all." No wonder therefore if those that go this forbidden way, in judging of the present work, are perplexed and confounded.

Indeed God has not taken that course, nor made use of those means, to begin and carry on this great work,  
which

which men in their wisdom would have thought most adviseable, if he had asked their counsel. But the great God has wrought like himself; so as very much to shew his own glory, and cast contempt on all that strength, wisdom, prudence and sufficiency that men have been wont to glory in; in fulfilment of that, "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Isa. ii. 17. God doth thus, intermingling so many stumbling-blocks with his work; in suffering so much of human weakness to appear; and in ordering so many things, that are mysterious to men's wisdom; In pouring out his Spirit chiefly on the common people, and admitting them nearer to himself than the great, the honourable, the rich, and the learned; agreeable to that prophecy: "The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah." Zech. xii. 7. Those that dwelt in the tents of Judah were the people that dwelt in the country, and were of inferior rank; the inhabitants of Jerusalem were the citizens, the men of wealth and figure; and Jerusalem also was the habitation or resort of the priests and levites, and the officers and judges. The house of David were the highest rank of all, the royal family, and the great men that were round the king.—It is evident, by the context, that this prophecy, has respect to something further than the saving the people out of the babylonish captivity.

God in this work has begun at the lower end, and has made use of *the weak and foolish things of the world* to carry it on. Of the ministers that have been chiefly employed, some have been mere babes in age and standing, and some of them such as have not been so high in reputation among their fellows as many others. And God has suffered their infirmities to appear in the sight of others, so as much to displease them; and at the same time it has pleased God greatly to succeed them, while he has not so succeeded others that are reputed vastly their superiors. Yea, there is reason to think that it has pleased God to make use of the infirmities

of some that he has succeeded: as particularly their imprudent and rash zeal, to chastise the deadness, negligence, earthly-mindedness and vanity that have been found among ministers in the late times, wherein ministers and people, have sunk into such a deep sleep. These things in ministers of the Gospel, that go forth as the embassadors of Christ, and have the care of immortal souls, are extremely abominable to God; vastly more hateful in his sight than all the imprudence and intemperate heats, wildness and distraction (as some call it) of these zealous preachers. A supine carelessness, or worldly spirit in a minister of the gospel, is the worst distraction in the sight of God. God may also make use of the censoriousness of some preachers, the more to humble and purify some of his own children that have been wrongfully censured, and to fit them for more eminent service.

II. Another fundamental error of those that do not acknowledge the divinity of this work, is, not taking the holy scriptures as a *whole*, and sufficient rule to judge of such things by. They that have one consistent rule to judge by, may come to some clear determination, but they that have half a dozen different rules to make the thing they would judge of agree to, instead of justly and clearly determining, do but perplex and darken themselves and others.

They will indeed make some use of Scripture, so far as they think it serves their turn; but do not make use of it *alone*, as a rule sufficient by itself. They make as much or more use of other things, wide from it, to judge of this work by. As particularly,

1, Some make *philosophy*, instead of the holy scriptures, their rule of judging of this work; particularly the philosophical notions they entertain of the nature of the soul, its faculties and affections. "There is but little sober solid religion, say they, in this work; it is little else but flash and noise. Religion now-a-days all runs out into transports and high flights of the passions and affections." In their philosophy, the affections of the soul are something not appertaining to the noblest part of the soul, but the meanest principles that it has; that belong to man as partaking of animal nature,



nature, and what he has in common with the brute creation, rather than any thing whereby he is conformed to angels and pure spirits.

But I cannot but think that these gentlemen labour under great mistakes, both in their philosophy and divinity. It is true, distinction must be made in the affections or passions. Some are much more solid than others. There are many exercises of the affections that are little to be depended on; and often there is a great deal that appertains to them, which is very much owing to the constitution and frame of the body; and that which more especially obtains the name of passion, is nothing solid or substantial. But it is false philosophy to suppose this is the case with all great and high affections; and false divinity to suppose that religious affections do not appertain to the substance and essence of Christianity. On the contraay, the very life and soul of all true religion consists in them.

All will allow that true holiness has its seat chiefly in the heart; not the head. It follows, that it consists chiefly in holy *affections*. For the things of religion take place in men's hearts, no further than they are *affected* with them. The informing of the understanding is all vain, any further than it *affects* the heart, or, which is the same thing, has influence on the *affections*.

Those gentlemen, that make light of these raised affections in religion, will doubtless allow that true religion or holiness, as it has its seat in the heart, is incapable of very high degrees, and high exercises in the soul. As for instance, they will doubtless allow that the holiness of the heart is capable of being raised to an hundred times as great a degree of strength as it is in the most eminent saint on earth, or to be exerted in an hundred times so strong and vigorous exercises of the heart; and yet be true religion or holiness still. Now therefore I would ask, by what name they will call these high exercises of the heart? Are they not high affections? What can they consist in? but in high acts of love; strong and vigorous exercises of benevolence and complacence; strong desires after God, yea, those very same high and raised affections that before they made light of, as worthy of little regard?

I suppose

I suppose further, that all allow there is nothing but solid religion in heaven; but that there, religion and holiness are raised to an exceeding great height, to strong, exalted exercises of heart. Now, what other kinds of such exceeding strong and high exercises of the heart, or of holiness as it has its seat in their hearts, can we devise for them, but only holy affections, high degrees of love to God, rejoicing in God, admiring of God? -- Therefore these things, in the angels in heaven, are not to be despised by the name of great heats, and transports of the passions.

And it will doubtless be yet farther allowed, that the more eminent the saints are on earth, the more they are like the saints in heaven, i. e. (by what has been just now observed) the more they have of high or raised affections.

If we take the Scriptures for our whole rule, then the greater and higher are the exercises of love to God, longings after God, delight in the children of God, love to mankind, brokenness of heart, abhorrence of sin, and self-abhorrence for sin; exulting and glorying in God; so much the higher is Christ's religion, or that virtue which he and his apostles taught, raised in the soul.

But it is a stumbling to some, that religious affections should be so *violent* (as they express it) in some persons: They are therefore ready to doubt whether it can be the Spirit, or whether this vehemence be not rather a sign of an evil spirit. But, what is represented in scripture as more powerful in its effects than the Spirit of God? which is therefore called "The power of the Highest," Luke i. 35. And it is said to operate in the minds of men with the *exceeding greatness of Divine Power*, and "according to the working of God's mighty power," Eph. i. 19. So in 2 Tim. i. 7. the Spirit of God is called *the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*. And the Spirit is represented by a mighty wind, and by fire, things most powerful in their operation.

2. Many are guilty of not taking the holy scriptures as a sufficient and whole rule, whereby to judge of this work, whether it be the work of God; in that  
they

they judge by those things which the scripture does not give as any signs or marks whereby to judge one way or the other, viz. The effects that religious exercises and affections of mind have upon the body. Scripture rules respect the state of the mind, and persons moral conduct, and voluntary behaviour; and not the physical state of the body. The design of the scripture is to teach us divinity, and not physick and anatomy. Ministers are made the watchmen of men's souls, and not their bodies; and therefore the great rule which God has committed into their hands, is to make them divines, and not physicians. Christ knew what instructions and rules his Church would stand in need of, better than we do; and, if he had seen it needful in order to the Church's safety, he doubtless would have given ministers rules to judge of bodily effects; and would have told them how the pulse should beat under such and such exercises of the mind; when men should look pale, and when they should shed tears; when they should tremble, and whether or no they should ever be faint or cry out; or whether the body should ever be put into convulsions: He would have put some book into their hands, to make them anatomists and physicians: But he has not done it, because he did not see it to be needful. He judged, that if ministers did their duty as overseers of the state of men's souls, and of their voluntary conduct, according to the rules he had given, his Church would be well provided for. And therefore those ministers of Christ, and overseers of souls, that busy themselves, and are full of concern, about the involuntary motions of the fluids and solids of men's bodies, when nothing appears but that the state of their minds, and their behaviour is good, and agreeable to God's Word; I say, such ministers go out of the place that Christ has set them in, and leave their proper business, as much as if they should undertake to tell who are under the influence of the Spirit by their looks, or their gait. I cannot see how the devil is like to get any advantage against us, if we do but thoroughly do our duty with respect to those two things, viz. the state of persons minds, and their moral conduct, seeing that they be agreeable to the rules that Christ has given



us. If things are but kept right in these respects, our fears and suspicions arising from extraordinary bodily effects seem wholly groundless.

The most specious thing that is alledged against these, is, That the body is impaired, and health injured; and that it is hard to think that GOD, in the merciful influences of his Spirit on men, would wound their bodies and impair their health. But if it were so commonly (which I do not suppose it is) that persons received a lasting wound to their health by extraordinary impressions made upon their minds, yet it is too much for us to determine that GOD shall never bring an outward calamity, in bestowing a vastly greater spiritual good. Jacob in wrestling with GOD, at the same time that he received the blessing from GOD, suffered a great outward calamity from his hand; GOD impaired his body, so that he never got over it as long as he lived: He gave him the blessing, but sent him away *halting on his thigh*, and he went lame all his life. And yet this is not mentioned as if it were any diminution of the great mercy of GOD to him, when GOD blessed him, and he received his name Israel, because *as a prince he had power with GOD, and had prevailed*.

But, say some, The operations of the Spirit of GOD are of a benign nature. True: Yet it has been a thing allowed, till now, that there is such a thing as being *sick of love* to Christ, or having the bodily strength weakened by strong and vigorous exercises of love to him. And however kind to human nature the influences of the Spirit of GOD are, yet no body doubts but that divine and eternal things, as they may be discovered, would over-power the nature of man in its present state; and that therefore the body, in its present weakness, is not fitted for the views and pleasures of heaven: Yea, that if GOD did discover but a little of that which is seen by the angels in heaven, our frail natures would sink under it. Let us rationally consider what we profess to believe of the infinite greatness of the things of GOD, the divine wrath, the divine glory, the infinite love and grace in Jesus Christ, and the vastness and infinite importance of the things of eternity. How reasonable then is it to suppose, that if it please GOD to  
withdraw



withdraw the veil, and give a view of the great things of another world in their transcendent and infinite greatness, human nature, that is as the grass, a shaking leaf, a weak withering flower, should totter under such a discovery? Such a bubble is too weak to bear the weight of a view of things that are so vast. Alas! What is dust and ashes, that it should support itself under the view of the awful wrath, or infinite glory of JEHOVAH! No wonder therefore that it is said, "No man can see me and live." That external glory and majesty of Christ which Daniel saw, when "there remained no strength in him, and his comeliness was turned in him into corruption," Dan. x. 6, 7 8; and which the Apostle John saw, when he "fell at his feet as dead:" was but a shadow of that spiritual glory and majesty of Christ, which will be manifested in another world, and which is sometimes, in some degree, manifested to the soul in this world, by the influences of the Spirit of God. And, if the beholding the shadow of this majesty and glory did so overpower human nature, is it unreasonable to suppose that a sight of the glory itself, should have as powerful an effect! The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the awful manifestations God made of his majesty and wrath, at the Red-Sea, and in the wilderness, and at Mount Sinai, where he gave the Law; and of the impression God caused it to have upon him, to the end that he might be saved from that wrath, and *rest in the day of trouble*; says, "When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, I trembled in myself that I might rest in the day of trouble." Hab. iii. 16. Which is much such an effect as the discovery of the same majesty and wrath, has had on many in these days; and to the same purposes, viz. to give them *rest in the day of trouble*, and save them from that wrath. The psalmist also speaks of such an effect as I have often seen on persons under religious affections, "I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments." Psal. cxix. 131.

God is pleased sometimes, in dealing spiritual blessings to his people, to exceed the capacity of the vessel in its present scantiness; so that he does not only fill it full,  
but

but he makes their *cup to run over*; and pours out a blessing, in such a manner and measure that there is not room to receive it. He gives them riches more than they can carry away; as he did to Jehoshaphat and his people in a time of great favour, in answer to earnest prayer, when the people blessed the Lord in the valley of Berachah. 2 Chron. xx. 25, 26. It has been with the disciples of Christ, for a long time, a time of great emptiness upon spiritual accounts: They have gone hungry, and have been toiling in vain, during a dark season: a time of night with the Church of God; as it was with the disciples of old, when they had *toiled all night and caught nothing*. But now, the morning being come, Jesus appears to his disciples, and takes a compassionate notice of their wants, and says to them, *Children, have ye any meat?* and gives some of them such abundance, that they are not able to draw their net; yea, so that their net breaks, and their vessel is over-loaded, and begins to sink.

We can't determine that God never shall give persons such a discovery of himself, as even to take away their lives. It is supposed by many divines, that Moses' life was taken away after this manner; and this has also been supposed of some other saints. Yea, I see no sure grounds to determine, that God shall never make such strong impressions on the mind by his Spirit, as shall be an occasion of so impairing the frame of the body, and particularly that part of the body, the brain, that persons shall be deprived of the use of reason. As it is too much for us to say, that God will not bring an outward calamity in bestowing spiritual blessings; so it is too much for us to determine how great an outward calamity he will bring. If God gives great discoveries of himself, and love to him, the benefit is infinitely greater than the calamity, tho' the life should presently be taken away; yea, tho' the soul should not immediately be taken, but lie some years in a deep sleep, and then be taken to heaven: Or, which is much the same thing, tho' it be deprived of the use of its faculties, and be inactive and unserviceable, as if it lay in a deep sleep for some years, and then should pass into glory. We cannot determine how great a calamity distraction

is,

is, when considered with all its consequences, and all that might have been consequent, if the distraction had not happened; nor indeed whether (thus considered) it be any calamity at all, or whether it be not a mercy, by preventing some great sin, or some more dreadful thing, if it had not been. It is a great fault in us to limit a sovereign all-wise God, whose judgments are a great deep, and his *ways past finding out*, where he has not limited himself, and in things concerning which he has not told us what his way shall be. — It is remarkable, considering in what multitudes, and to how great a degree, the frame of the body has been overpowered of late, that persons lives have notwithstanding been preserved, and that the instances of those that have been deprived of reason have been so very few.\*

3. Another thing that some make their rule to judge of this work by, instead of the Holy Scriptures, is History, or former Observation. These err two ways; First, If there be any thing new and extraordinary in the circumstances of this work, that was not observed in former times, that is a rule with them to reject it. Herein they make that their rule, that God has not made so; and limit God, where he has not limited himself. And this is especially unreasonable in this case. For whosoever has well weighed the mysterious methods of divine wisdom, in the progress of the work of redemption, from the first promise of the Seed of the woman to this time, may easily observe that it has all along been God's manner to open new scenes, and to bring forth to view things new and wonderful, such as *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard*. As the old creation was carried on through six days, and appeared all complete, settled in a state of rest on the seventh; so the new creation, which is immensely the greatest work, is carried on in a gradual progress, from the Fall of Man, to the consummation of all things. And as, in the progress of the old creation, there were still new things accomplished; new wonders appeared every day in the sight of the angels, the spectators of that work; new scenes were opened, things that they had not seen be-

\* N. B. *I do not know of one such instance in England.*



fore, till the whole was finished ; so it is in the progress of the new creation. So that that promise, *Isaiah* *lxiv.* 4, " For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him ; " Though it had a glorious fulfilment in the days of Christ, and the Apostles, as the words are applied, *1 Cor.* *ii.* 9. yet it always remains to be fulfilled, in things that are yet behind, till the new creation is finished, at Christ's delivering up the kingdom to his Father.

And besides, those things in this work, that have been chiefly complained of as new, are not so new as has been generally imagined : Though they have been much more frequent lately, in proportion to the uncommon degree, extent and swiftness, and other extraordinary circumstances of the work, yet they are not new in their kind ; but are things of the same nature as have been found in the Church of God before, from time to time.

We have a remarkable instance in Mr. Bolton, that noted Minister of the Church of England, who being awakened by the preaching of the famous Mr. Perkins, in the University of Cambridge, was subject to such terrors as threw him to the ground, and caused him to roar with anguish ; and the pangs of the New-Birth in him were such, that he lay pale and without sense, like one dead. And we have another in the life of Mr. George Trosse, written by himself, of terrors occasioned by awakenings of conscience, so overpowering the body, as to deprive him, for some time, of the use of reason.

Yea, such extraordinary external effects of inward impressions have not only been found in here and there a single person, but there have also before now been times wherein they have appeared in congregations, in many at once. So in the year 1625, in the West of Scotland, it was a frequent thing for many to be so seized with terror in hearing of the word, by the Spirit of God convincing them of sin, that they fell down, and were carried out of the church. Many in France also were so wonderfully affected with the preaching  
of



of the Gospel, in the time of those famous Divines Farrel and Viret, that for a time they could not follow their secular business: And many in Ireland, in the year 1628, were so filled with divine comforts, that they made but little use of either meat, drink or sleep, and professed they did not feel the need thereof.

Great outcries under awakenings were also frequently heard of, in former times, in this country, as some aged persons now living do testify: I think fit here to insert a testimony of my honoured father, of what he remembers formerly to have heard.

"I well remember, that one Mr. Alexander Allan, a Scots Gentleman of good credit, that dwelt formerly in this town, shewed me a letter that came from Scotland, that gave an account of a Sermon preached in the city of Edinburgh (as I remember) in the time of the sitting of the General Assembly of Divines in that kingdom, which so affected the people, that there was a great and loud cry made throughout the Assembly. I have also been credibly informed, that it was a common thing, when the famous Mr. John Rogers, of Deadham in England, was preaching, for some of his hearers to cry out: And by what I have heard, I conclude that it was usual for many that heard that awakening preacher of God's word, to make a great cry in the congregation."

TIMOTHY EDWARDS.

Windsor, May 5, 1742.

There have been instances also before now, of persons crying out in transports of divine joy in New-England. We have an instance in Capt. Clap's memoirs, not of a silly woman or child, but a man of solid understanding, that, in a high transport of spiritual joy, was made to cry out aloud on his bed. His words (p. 9.) are, "God's Holy Spirit did witness with my Spirit, that I was a child of God; and did fill my heart and soul with such assurance that Christ was mine, as to make me cry out upon my bed, with a loud voice, *He is come, he is come!*"

There has, before now, been both crying out and falling down, in this town, under awakenings of con-

science, and also in some of the neighbouring towns. In one of them, more than seven years ago, were a great number together that cried out and fell down under convictions. And the Rev. Mr. Williams of Deerfield, gave me an account of an aged man in that town, many years before that, that being awakened by his preaching, cried out aloud in the congregation. There have been many instances in this and some neighbouring towns, before now, of persons fainting with joyful discoveries made to their souls; once several together in this town. And there also formerly have been several instances here of persons flesh waxing cold and benumbed, and their hands clinched; yea, their bodies being set into convulsions, being overpowered with a strong sense of the astonishingly great and excellent things of God and the eternal world.

Another way that some err, in making history and former observation their rule to judge of this work, instead of the Holy Scripture, is in comparing some external accidental circumstances of this work, with what has appeared sometimes in Enthusiasts; and as they find an agreement in these, so they reject the whole work, concluding it to be Enthusiasm. So some external appearances that were found amongst the *French Prophets*, have been of late trumped up with great assurance and triumph.

4. I would propose it to be considered, whether some, instead of making the Scriptures their only Rule to judge of this work, do not make *their own experience* the Rule, and reject such things, because they never felt them themselves. Are there not many that have entertained suspicions, if not peremptory condemnations, of those extreme terrors, and those great discoveries of the glorious perfections of God, and of the beauty and love of Christ; and such vehement affections, such high transports of love and joy, and exercises of mind, that have such great effects on persons bodies, merely, or chiefly, because they knew nothing about them by experience? Persons are very ready to be suspicious of what they have not felt themselves. It is to be feared many good men have been guilty of this error; which yet does not make it the less

less unreasonable. And perhaps there are some that upon this ground do not only reject these extraordinary things, but all such conviction of sin, and such discoveries of the Glory of God, and excellency of Christ, and inward conviction of the Truth of the Gospel, by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, as are necessary to Salvation.

III. Another fundamental error of those that reject this Work is, their *not duly distinguishing the good from the bad*, and so rejecting the work in general, for the sake of some things, which are accidental to it, that are evil. They look for more in men that are subject to the operations of a good spirit, than is justly to be expected from them, in this imperfect state, and dark world, where so much blindness remains in the best. When any profess to have received light and comforts from heaven, and to have had communion with God, many are ready to expect that now they appear like angels, and not still like poor, feeble, blind and sinful worms. That so much corruption is left in the hearts of God's own children, was always a stumbling-block to the world; but it will not be wondered at, by those that are duly mindful of two things; *First*, the Word of God, which teaches us the state of Christians in this world: And *secondly*, Their own heart, at least if they have any grace, and have experience of its conflicts with corruption. If all our conduct, both open and secret, should be known, and our hearts laid open to the world; how should we be, even ready to flee from the light of the sun, and hide ourselves from the view of mankind? And what great allowances should we need that others should make for us? Perhaps much greater than we are willing to make for others.

The great weakness of the bigger part of mankind, in any affair that is new and uncommon, appears in not distinguishing; but either approving or condemning all in the lump. They that highly approve of the affair in general, cannot bear to have any thing at all found fault with: And, on the other hand, those that fasten their eyes upon some things that are amiss, at once reject the whole. But it is rash and unjust, when



we proceed thus in judging either of a particular person, or a people, or of such an affair as the present influence on the minds of the people of this land. Yet so it is: Many, if they see any thing ill in a particular person, will at once brand him as an hypocrite. And, if there be two or three of a People or Society, that behave themselves irregularly, the whole must bear the blame of it. If there be a few, tho' it may be not above one in an hundred, that had a shew of being the happy partakers of the benefits of this work, who prove naught in the end, the whole work must be rejected on their account; and those in general, that make the like profession, must be condemned for their sakes.

2. So careful are some persons lest this work should be defended, that now they will hardly allow, that the influences of the Spirit of God on the heart can so much as *indirectly*, and *accidentally*, be the occasion of sin. — Thus far is true, that this influence will not be an occasion of the increase of the corruption of the heart in general, but of the weakening of it: Yet there is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that, at the same time it weakens corruption in general, it may be an occasion of the turning what is left into a new channel, and so of there being more of some certain kinds of the exercise of corruption than there was before; as that which tends to hinder and stop the course of a stream, if it do not do it wholly, may give a new course to so much of the water as gets by the obstacle. The influences of the Spirit, for instance, may be an occasion of new ways of the exercise of *Pride*. This was not doubted of, till now it is found to be needful to maintain the war against this work.

But I suppose all will allow, that the influences of the Spirit of God, yea, and an high degree of love to God, is consistent with these two things, viz. a considerable degree of remaining corruption, and also many errors of judgment in matters of religion, and in matters of practice. And this is all that need to be allowed, in order to its being demonstratively evident, that even Love to God may accidentally move a person to that which is contrary to the Will of God. For a  
high



high degree of Love to God will strongly move a person to do that which he believes to be agreeable to God's will; and therefore, if he be mistaken, and be persuaded that is agreeable to the Will of God, which indeed is contrary to it, then his Love will accidentally, but strongly, incline him to that which is indeed contrary to the Will of God.

3. Farther: True Disciples of Christ may have a great deal of false zeal, such as the Disciples had of old, when they would have fire called for from heaven to come down on the Samaritans, because they did not receive them. And even so great a Saint as Moses, who conversed with God, as a man with his friend, and concerning whom God gives his testimony, that *he was very meek, above any man upon the face of the earth*, yet may be rash and sinful in his zeal, so as to speak unadvisedly with his lips. Yea, men, in those very things wherein they are influenced by a pious principle, yet, thro' error and want of due consideration, may be very rash with their zeal. It was a truly good Spirit that animated that excellent generation of Israel that was in Joshua's time, in that affair that we have an account of in the 22d chapter of Joshua; and yet they were rash and heady with their zeal, to go about to gather all Israel to go up furiously to war with their brethren of the two tribes and half, about their building the altar Ed, without first enquiring into the matter, or so much as sending a messenger to be informed. So the Christians that were of the circumcision condemned Peter for receiving Cornelius, tho' there is all appearance that they acted from a real concern for the will and honour of God. So the primitive Christians, from their zeal for and against unclean meats, censured and condemned one another: This was a bad effect, and yet the Apostle bears them witness, that both sides acted from a good principle, Rom. xiv. 6. The zeal of the Corinthians with respect to the incestuous man, tho' the Apostle highly commends it, yet at the same time needed a caution, lest they should carry it too far, so as to fail of Christian meekness and forgiveness. 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and chap. vii. 11, to the end.

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4. It surely cannot be wondered at by considerate persons, that at a time when multitudes have their affections greatly moved, many should run into errors and mistakes with respect to their duty, and consequently into practices that are imprudent and irregular. I question whether there be a man in New-England, of the strongest reason and greatest learning, but what would be put to it to keep master of himself, thoroughly to weigh his words, and consider all the consequences of his behaviour, if he were so strongly impressed with a sense of divine things, and his affections so exceedingly moved, as has been frequent of late among the common people. — How little then do they consider human nature, who think it so insuperable a stumbling-block, when such multitudes of all kinds of capacities, natural tempers, educations, customs and manners of life, are so greatly and variously affected, that imprudences should abound; especially in a state of things so uncommon, and when the degree, extent, swiftness and power of the operation is so extraordinary, and so new, that there has not been time and experience enough to give birth to rules for people's conduct, and so unusual in times past, that the writings of Divines do not afford rules to direct us in such a state of things?

A great deal of noise and tumult, and darkness mixed with light, is to be expected in the beginning of something very extraordinary, and very glorious in the state of things in human Society, or the Church of God. As after nature has long been shut up in a cold dead state, when the Sun returns in the Spring, there is, together with the increase of light and heat, very dirty and tempestuous weather, before all is settled calm and serene, and all nature rejoices in its bloom and beauty. It is in the new creation as it was in the old, the Spirit of God first moved upon the face of the waters, which was an occasion of uproar and tumult, and things were gradually brought to a settled state, till at length all stood forth in that beautiful peaceful order, when the heavens and the earth were finished, *and God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* When God is about to bring to pass something great  
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and glorious in the world, Nature is in a ferment and struggle, and the world as it were in travail. As when GOD was about to introduce the MESSIAH into the world, and the new and glorious dispensation that he set up, *he shook the heavens and the earth.*

5. The weakness of human nature has always appeared in times of a great Revival of Religion, by a disposition to run to extremes, especially in these three things, Enthusiasm, Superstition, and intemperate Zeal. So it appeared in the time of the Reformation; and also in the days of the Apostles, many were then exceedingly disposed to lay weight on those things that were notional and chimerical, giving heed to fables and whimsies, as appears by 1 Tim. i. 4. and iv. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 16. and ver. 23. and Tit. i. 14. and iii. 9. Many, as Ecclesiastical History informs us, fell off into the most wild Enthusiasm; and many into Superstition, Will-worship and a voluntary Humility, giving heed to the commandments of men. And what a proneness then appeared to swerve from the Spirit of the Gospel, by rash indiscreet Zeal, censuring and condemning Ministers and people; one saying, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos; another, I of Cephas; judging one another for differences of opinion about smaller matters, unclean meats, holy days, and holy places, and their civil intercourse and communication with their heathen neighbours? And how much did vain jangling and disputing prevail, under the name of religious Zeal? 2 Tim. vi. 4, 5. 2 Tim. ii. 16. and Tit. iii. 9. What a task had the Apostles to keep them within bounds, and maintain good Order in the churches? How often are they mentioning their irregularities? The prevailing of such like disorders seems to have been the special occasion of writing many of their epistles. The church in that great effusion of the Spirit that was then, was under the care of infallible guides, that watched over them day and night; but yet so prone were they, thro' the corruption of nature, to get out of the way, that irregularity and confusion rose to a very great height, even in the Apostles lifetime, and under their eye. And tho' some of the Apostles lived long to settle the state of things, yet, presently



presently after they were dead, the Christian Church ran into many superstitions and childish notions and practices. And let any wise person, that has not, in the midst of dispute, got beyond the calmness of consideration, impartially consider to what lengths, we may reasonably suppose, many of the primitive Christians would have gone, if they had had no inspired guides; and whether it is not probable that the Church of Corinth in particular, would in a little time have broke to pieces, and dissolved in a state of the utmost confusion? And yet this would have been no evidence that there had not been a glorious work of the Spirit in that City. But as for us, we have no infallible Apostle to rectify disorders, and reclaim us when we are wandering; but they that are got into a wrong path, continue to wander, till experience of the mischievous issue convinces them of their error.

6. If we look over this affair, and seriously weigh it in its circumstances, it may easily be accounted for, how many should run into great errors, and just such errors as they have. It is known, that some, that have been great instruments to promote this work, have been very young; and how natural is it for such as are themselves newly waked out of sleep, and have a new and wonderful scene opened to them; who have in view the reality, the vastness and infinite importance and nearness of spiritual and eternal things; and at the same time see the world asleep about them, who have not the advantage of age and experience, and have had but little opportunity to study Divinity, or to converse with aged experienced Christians and Divines: I say, how natural is it for such to fall into many errors with respect to the state of mankind, and with respect to the methods of their relief? Is it any wonder that they have not at once learned how to make all the allowances that are to be made, and that they do not at once find out that method of dealing with the world, that is adapted to the mysterious state and nature of mankind? Is it any wonder that they cannot at once foresee what the consequences of things will be, what evils are to be guarded against, and what difficulties are like to arise, that are to be provided for?

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We have long been in a strange stupor: The influences of the Spirit of God upon the heart have been but little felt, and the nature of them but little taught; so that they are in many respects new to great numbers of those that have lately fallen under them. And is it any wonder if they that never before had experience of the supernatural influence of the Divine Spirit upon their souls, and never were instructed in the nature of these influences, do not so well know how to distinguish one impression from another, and so insensibly run into Enthusiasm, taking every strong impression to be divine? How natural is it to suppose, that among the multitudes of illiterate people (most of which are in their youth) who find themselves so wonderfully changed, and brought into such new, and before (to them) almost unheard-of circumstances, many should pass wrong judgments of both persons and things that are about them; and that, now they behold them in such a new light, they should go further from the judgment they were won't to make of them than they ought, and pass from one extreme to another? And why should it be thought strange, that those that scarce ever heard of any such thing as pouring out of the Spirit of God before; or, if they did, had no notion of it, do not know how to behave themselves in such a new and strange state of things?

When these persons are extraordinarily affected with a fresh discovery, of the greatness of the Divine Being, the infinite importance of eternal things, and the dreadful danger and madness of mankind, together with a great sense of God's kindness and love to them; no wonder that they know not how to sit still, and forbear speaking and acting with uncommon earnestness and vigour. And if they be not persons of more than common steadiness and discretion, or have not some person of wisdom to direct them, it is a wonder if they do not proceed without due caution, and do things that are irregular.

7. *Censuring others*, is the worst disease, with which this affair has been attended: But yet such a time is indeed a time of great temptation to it. When there has been such great and long continued deadness, and  
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many are brought out of a state of nature into a state of grace, in so extraordinary a manner, and filled with such uncommon degrees of light, it is natural for such to form their notions of a state of grace wholly from what they experience.

Tho' censoriousness be a thing that is very sinful, yet it is not found in hypocrites only: Job's three friends seem to have been eminently holy men, who yet censured the best man on earth, very positively determining that he was an unconverted man; yea, Job himself, that particularly excelled in a humble, meek and patient Spirit, was guilty of bitterly censuring his three friends, as wicked, vile hypocrites, Job xvi. 9, 10, 11. "He teareth me in his wrath who hateth me, he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me: They have gaped upon me with their mouth. — God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked." And again, Job xvii. 8, 9, 10. "Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite: The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. But as for you all, do you return and come now, for I cannot find one wise man (i. e. one good man) among you."

Thus, I think, the errors and irregularities that attend this work may be accounted for, from the consideration of the weakness and common corruption of mankind; together with the circumstances of the work, tho' we should suppose it to be the work of God. And it would not be a just objection in any to say, If these impressions are from God, why does not the same Spirit give strength of understanding and capacity in proportion, to those persons that are the subjects of them; so that strong affections may not, thro' their error, drive them to an irregular conduct? For I do not know that God has any where obliged himself to do it. The end of the influences of God's Spirit is, to make men wise to salvation; and he has also appointed means for our gaining such degrees of other knowledge, as we need, to conduct ourselves regularly, which means should be carefully used; but the end of the  
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the influence of the Spirit of God is not to increase men's natural capacities, nor has God obliged himself immediately to increase civil prudence in proportion to the degree of spiritual light.

8. If we consider the errors that attend this work, not only as from man and his infirmity, but also as from God, and by his permission and disposal, they are not strange, tho' it be as to the substance, a work of God. If God intends this great Revival of Religion to be the dawning of a happy state of his Church, it may be an instance of the Divine Wisdom, in the beginning of it, to suffer so many irregularities in conduct. For it will be very likely to be of excellent benefit to his Church, in the continuance and progress of the work. Their experience, in the first setting out, of the mischievous consequences of these errors, may be a happy defence to them afterwards, for many generations. As when David and all Israel went about to bring back the ark, after it had been long absent; they at first sought not the Lord after the due order, and they smarted for their error: But this put them upon more thoroughly acquainting themselves with the will of God, and seeking and serving him with greater circumspection: And the consequence was glorious, viz. their seeking God in such a manner as was accepted of him; and the ark of God's ascending into the heights of Zion, with those great and extraordinary rejoicings of the King and all the people, without any frown or rebuke from God intermixed; and God's dwelling thenceforward in the midst of the people.

And it is very analogous to the manner of God's dealing with his people, to permit a great deal of infirmity to appear, in the beginning of a glorious work of his grace, to humble them, and fit them for that prosperity he is about to advance them to, and the more to secure to himself the honour of such a glorious work. For, by man's exceeding weakness, it is evident that God does not lay the foundation of it in man's strength or wisdom.

And as we need not wonder at the errors that attend this work, if we look at the hand of men that are guilty of them, and the hand of God in permitting them:



them: so neither, if we consider the hand that Satan has in them. For as this work is much greater than any other that has ever been in New-England, so no wonder that the devil is more alarmed and enraged, and exerts himself more vigorously against it, and does more powerfully endeavour to tempt and mislead those that are the subjects or promoters of it.

Whatever imprudences there have been, and whatever irregularities; whatever vehemence of the passions, and heats of the imagination; whatever error in judgment and indiscreet zeal; and whatever outcries, and faintings, and agitations of body; yet it is manifest and notorious, that there has been of late a very uncommon influence upon the minds of very many people, that has been attended with the following effects; viz. a great increase of seriousness and sober consideration of the things of the eternal world; a disposition to hearken to any thing that is said of things of this nature, with attention and affection; a disposition to hear matters of religion with solemnity, and as matters of great importance; a disposition to make these things the subject of conversation; and a great disposition to hear the word of God preached, to take all opportunities in order to it; and to attend on the publick worship of God, and all external duties of religion, in a more solemn and decent manner. Multitudes of vain, thoughtless persons, are quite changed, and become serious and considerate: There is a vast increase of concern for the salvation of the soul, and of that enquiry, *What shall I do to be saved?* The hearts of multitudes have been greatly taken off from the things of the world, its profits, pleasures and honours; and have been made sensible of the pernicious consequences of sin, and what a dreadful thing it is to lie under the displeasure of God: They have also been awakened to a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the reality of another world: They are more afraid of sin, more careful to know what is contrary to the will of God, that they may avoid it, and what he requires of them, that they may do it; more watchful over their own hearts, earnestly desirous of being informed what are the means for their salvation,

salvation, and diligent in the use of those that God has appointed in order to it. Many very stupid, senseless sinners, have been greatly awakened. There is a strange alteration amongst young people: By a powerful influence on their minds, they have been brought to forsake those things, as it were at once, that they were extremely fond of, and that they seemed to place the happiness of their lives in, and which nothing before could induce them to forsake; as their vain company, night-walking, their mirth and jollity, their impure language and lewd songs: In vain did ministers preach against those things before, and in vain were laws made to restrain them, and in vain was all the vigilance of Magistrates and Civil Officers; but now they have dropt them as it were of themselves. And there is a great alteration amongst old and young as to drinking, profane speaking, and extravagance in apparel. Many notoriously vicious persons have been reformed and become externally new creatures: Some that are wealthy, and of a fashionable, gay education, that seemed to have their minds swallowed up with the shew and pleasures of the world, have relinquished these vanities, and are become serious, mortified and humble in their conversation. It is astonishing to see the alteration that is in some places, where before was no appearance of religion: And now they are transformed into another sort of people; and are, as it were, gone to a new world: Their thoughts, and their talk, and their concern, affections and enquiries, are now about the favour of God, an interest in Christ, and a spiritual blessedness, and acceptance and happiness in a future world. And, through the greater part of New-England, the Holy Bible is in much greater esteem and use than it used to be: The great things that are contained in it, are much more the subjects of meditation and conversation; and other books of piety have been abundantly more in use: The Lord's-Day is more religiously observed: And abundance has been lately done at making up differences, and confessing faults one to another, and making restitution; probably more within these two years, than was done in thirty years before. And surprizing has been the power of that spirit that has

been poured out on the land, to destroy old grudges, and make up long-continued breaches, and to bring those that seemed to be irreconcilable, to embrace each other in a sincere and entire amity.

Great numbers have been brought to a deep sense of their own sinfulness and vileness; the sinfulness of their lives, the heinousness of their disregard of the authority of the great God, and the heinousness of their living in contempt of a Saviour: And many persons have had such a sense of their own sinfulness, that they thought themselves to be the worst of all, and that none ever was so vile as they. And so far as we are worthy to be credited one by another, in what we say, (and persons of good understanding and sound mind, and known and experienced probity, have a right to be believed by their neighbours, when they speak of things that fall under their observation and experience.) Multitudes have lately been brought to an assurance and sweet rest of soul in Christ, as a glorious Saviour, a strong Rock and high Tower; accompanied with a sensible, strong and sweet love to God, far surpassing all earthly pleasures; and a rest of soul in him, as a portion and the fountain of all good; attended with an abhorrence of sin, and earnest longings after more holiness and conformity to God, with a sense of the great need of God's help in order to holiness of life; together with a most dear love to all that are supposed to be the children of God, and a love to mankind in general, and a most tender compassion for the souls of sinners, and earnest desires of the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

And many little children have been remarkably enlightened, their hearts wonderfully affected and enlarged, and their mouths opened, in a manner far beyond their years, to the just astonishment of those that heard them: Some of these are still greatly affected with the glory of divine things, and the excellence and love of the Redeemer, having their hearts filled with love to and joy in him, and continuing serious and pious in their behaviour.

9. And now let us consider. — Is it not strange that, in a Christian country, there should be any at a loss



loss whose work this is, whether the work of God or of the devil? Is it not a shame to New-England, that such a work should be doubted of here? Need we look over the histories of all past times, to see if there be not some circumstances and external appearances that attend this work, that have been formerly found amongst Enthusiasts? Whether the *Montanists* had not great transports of joy, and whether the *French Prophets* had not agitations of body? Blessed be God! He does not put us to the toil of such enquiries. We need not say, *Who shall ascend into heaven*, to bring us down something whereby to judge of this work? Nor does God send us beyond the seas, nor into past ages, to obtain a rule that shall satisfy us: But we have a rule near at hand, a sacred Book that God himself has put into our hands, with clear and infallible marks sufficient to resolve us; which Book we must reject, not only in some particular passages, but in the substance of it, if we reject such a Work, as not being the Work of God. The whole tenor of the Gospel proves it; all the notion of Religion that the Scripture gives us confirms it.

I suppose there is scarcely a Minister in this land, but has prayed that God would pour out his Spirit, work a Reformation and Revival of Religion, and turn us from our intemperance, profaneness, uncleanness, worldliness and other sins; and we have kept from year to year days of public fasting and prayer to God, to humble ourselves for our sins, and to seek of God forgiveness and reformation: And now when so great and extensive a reformation is so suddenly and wonderfully accomplished, in those very things that we have sought to God for, shall we not acknowledge it? And that because (although indeed there be such a work, attended with all these glorious effects, yet) the work is attended with mixture of error and imprudencies; because some persons are carried away with impressions, and are indiscreet, and too censorious with their zeal; and because there are high transports of religious affections; and because of some effects on persons bodies that do not understand?

10. Those that are waiting for the fruit determine whether this be the work o



been seen in New-England, and scarce ever has been heard of in any land. Who that saw the state of things in New-England a few years ago, the state that it was settled in, and the way that we had been so long going on in, would have thought that in so little time there would be such a change?

Such a work is, in its nature, the most glorious of any work of God whatsoever, and is always so spoken of in Scripture. It is the work of redemption (the great end of all the other works of God, and of which the work of creation was but a shadow) in the event, success and end of it: It is the work of New Creation, that is infinitely more glorious than the Old. I am bold to say, that the work of God in the conversion of one soul, is a more glorious work of God than the Creation of the whole material Universe. It is the most glorious of God's works, as it above all others manifests the glory of God; as it shews *the exceeding greatness of GOD's power, and the glory and riches of his grace*; wherein Christ has the most glorious triumph over his enemies, and wherein God is most exalted: And it is a work above all others glorious, as it concerns the happiness of mankind; more happiness, and a greater benefit to man, is the fruit of each single drop of such a shower, than all the temporal good of the most happy revolution in a land or nation amounts to, or all that a people could gain by the conquest of the world.

And as this work is very glorious in its *Nature*, so it is in the *Extent* of it; being in this respect vastly beyond any that ever was known in New-England. There has formerly sometimes been a remarkable awakening, in some particular congregation: But now God has brought to pass a new thing, he has wrought a great work of this nature, that has extended from one end of the land to the other, besides what has been wrought in other British Colonies in America.

The work is very glorious in the great *numbers* that have been turned from sin to God. How high an honour, and great reward of their labours, have some eminent persons signified that they should esteem it; if they should be made the instruments of the conversion  
of



of but *one* soul? No greater event than that is thought worthy of great notice in heaven, among the hosts of glorious angels, who rejoice and sing on such an occasion: And when there are many thousands converted, shall it be esteemed worth but little notice, and be mentioned with coldness and indifference here on earth, by those among whom such a work is wrought?

The work has been very glorious and wonderful in many *circumstances* of it, wherein God has in an uncommon manner made his power conspicuous; as in the extraordinary *degrees* of awakening, the *suddenness* of conversions in innumerable instances, in whom tho' the work was quick, yet the thing wrought is manifestly durable. How common a thing has it been for great part of a congregation to be at once moved by a mighty invisible power; and for six, eight or ten souls to be converted to God at once, in whom the visible change still continues? How great an alteration has been made in some populous towns, the change still abiding? And how many very vicious persons have been wrought upon, so as to become visibly new creatures? God has also made his hand very visible, and his work glorious, in the many little children that have been wrought upon, any one of which formerly would have been thought so remarkable, as to be worthy to be recorded, and published through the land.

The work is also exceeding glorious in the high *attainments* of Christians, in the extraordinary degrees of light, love and spiritual joy, that God has bestowed upon great multitudes. In this respect too, the land in all parts has abounded with such instances, any one of which, if they had happened formerly, would have been thought worthy to be taken notice of throughout the *British* Dominions. The *New Jerusalem* in this respect has begun to come down from heaven, and perhaps never were more of the prelibations of heaven's glory given upon earth.

There being a great many errors and irregularities mixed with this work of God, arising from our weakness, darkness and corruption, does not hinder it from being very glorious. Our follies and sins that we mix, do in some respects manifest the glory of it: The glory

of divine power and grace is set off with the greater lustre, by what appears at the same time of the weakness of the earthen vessel. It is God's pleasure that there should be something remarkably to manifest the weakness and unworthiness of the subject, at the same time that he displays the excellency of his power and riches of his grace. And I doubt not but some of those things that make us here to look on this work with a displeased countenance, do heighten the Songs of the Angels, when they praise God and the Lamb for the glory of God's all-sufficiency, and the efficacy of Christ's Redemption.

## PART II.

*Shewing the Obligation that all are under to acknowledge, rejoice in, and promote this Work.*

1. **T**HERE are many things in the word of God, which shew that when God remarkably appears for his Church, and against his enemies, it is a most dangerous thing to be slow and backward to acknowledge God in the work. Christ's people are in Scripture represented as his army; he is the Lord of Hosts or Armies; he is the Captain of the Host of the Lord, the Captain of his people's salvation: And therefore it may well be highly resented, if they do not resort to him when he orders his banner to be displayed; if they refuse to follow him when he blows the trumpet, and gloriously appears going forth against his enemies. God expects that every living soul should have his attention roused on such an occasion, should cheerfully yield to the call, and heedfully and diligently obey it: "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth the trumpet, hear ye." Isa. xviii. 3. How severe is the Martial Law in such a case, when any of an army refuses to obey the sound of the trumpet, and follow his General to the battle? God at such a time appears in peculiar manifestations of his glory; and therefore to lie still, and refuse to follow God, will be resented as an high contempt of him.

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At a time when God manifests himself in such a work for his Church, there is no such thing as being neuters; there is a necessity of being either for or against the King that then gloriously appears. So it was when Christ came down from heaven in his incarnation, and appeared on earth in his human presence; there was no such thing as being, neither on his side nor against him: Those that sat still and said nothing, and did not declare for him, and come and join with him, after he, by his word and works, had given sufficient evidence who he was, were justly looked upon as his enemies; as Christ says, Matth. xii. 30. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad. So it is in a time when Christ is remarkably spiritually present, as well as when he is bodily present; and when he comes to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it, as well as in the revelation and purchase. If a King should come into one of his Provinces, that had been oppressed by its foes, where some of his subjects had fallen off to the enemy, and joined with them against their lawful Sovereign; I say, if the lawful Sovereign himself should come into the Province, and should ride forth there against his enemies, and should call upon all that were on his side to come and gather themselves to him; there would be no such thing, in such a case, as standing neuter: They that lay still and staid at a distance would undoubtedly be looked upon and treated as rebels. So in the day of battle, when two armies join, there is no such thing for any present as being of neither party, all must be on one side or the other; and they that are not found with the conqueror in such a case, must expect to fall with the rest of his enemies.

2. When God manifests himself with such glorious power, he appears especially determined to put honour upon his Son, and to fulfil his oath, that he would *make every knee to bow, and every tongue to confess him*. Such a day is a day of his power, wherein he shall rule in the midst of his enemies; these especially are the times wherein God declares his firm decree, that his Son shall *reign on his holy hill of Zion*: And therefore those that at such a time do not *kiss the Son*, as he then appears



appears in the glory of his Majesty, expose themselves to *perish from the way*, and to be *dashed in pieces with a rod of iron*.

It always is so, that when Christ is in a peculiar manner manifested, by a glorious work of God in his Church, as a foundation and a sanctuary for some, he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to others. They that continue long to be offended at such a work of Christ, stumble at Christ, and are offended in him. But how dangerous is it to continue always stumbling at such a work, for ever doubting of it, and forbearing fully to acknowledge it, and give God the glory of it! Such persons are in danger to *go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken*, and to have Christ *a stone of stumbling* to them, that shall be an occasion of their ruin.

The Prophet Isaiah, ch. xxix. 14. speaks of God's proceeding to do a marvellous work, that which should stumble and confound the wise and prudent, which the Apostle, in Acts xiii. 41, applies to the glorious work of salvation wrought in those days by the redemption of Christ. The Prophet in the context of that place, Isa. xxix. speaking of the same thing, and of the Prophets and Rulers and Seers, those wise and prudent, whose eyes God had closed, says to them, ver. 9. "Stay yourselves and wonder." I leave it to others to consider whether it be not natural to interpret it thus, "Wonder at this *marvellous work*; let it be a "strange thing, a great mystery that you know not "what to make of, and that you are very slow and "backward to acknowledge, long delaying to come to "a determination concerning it." And what persons are in danger of, that are thus slow to acknowledge God in such a work, we learn by that of the Apostle, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

3. The Church is called upon greatly to rejoice, when at any time Christ remarkably appears, to enlarge his own kingdom, and to deliver poor souls out of the pit wherein there is no water. In Zech. ix. 9, 10, 11. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter

O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation." Christ was pleased to give a typical representation of such an event, in his solemn entry into Jerusalem, which was a type of the Church or Daughter of Zion, then spoken of, probably intending it as a figure of the great actual fulfilment of this prophecy, that was to be after his ascension. When he made this his solemn entry into Jerusalem, and the whole multitude of the Disciples were rejoicing and praising God, with loud voices, for all the mighty works that they had seen; the Pharisees said, *Master, rebuke thy Disciples*; but we are told, Luke xix. 39; 40. "He answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Signifying that if Christ's Disciples should be unaffected on such an occasion, and should not appear openly to acknowledge and rejoice in the glory of God, it would manifest such a fearful hardness of heart, that the very stones would condemn them. Should not this make those consider, who have held their peace so long since Christ has so wonderfully manifested his glory in this mighty work of his Spirit, and so many of his Disciples have been *rejoicing and praising GOD with loud voices*?

4. The great danger of not joining with God's people at that glorious day is also represented, Isa. x. 12. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

Most of the great temporal deliverances that were wrought for Israel of old, as Expositors observe, were typical of the great spiritual works of God for the salvation of men's souls, and the prosperity of his Church, in the days of the Gospel; and especially do they represent that greatest of all God's works of actual salvation, that shall be in the latter days; which, above all others the appointed time, and proper season of actual redemption of men's souls. But it may be observed, that if any appeared to oppose God's work in those great temporal deliverances: or if there were any of his people, that on such occasions lay still, and stood

stood at a distance, and did not arise and acknowledge God in his work, and appear to promote it, it was what in a remarkable manner incensed God's anger, and brought his curse upon such persons.

So, when God wrought that great work of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, (which was a type of God's delivering his Church out of the spiritual Egypt,) how highly did God resent it, when the Amalekites appeared as opposers in that affair? And how dreadfully did he curse them for it? *Exod. xvii. 14, 15, 16.* "And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-Nissi. For he said, Because the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." And how highly did God resent it in the Moabites and Ammonites, that they did not lend an helping hand? *Deut. xxiii. 3, 4.* "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth congregation, shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever: Because they met you not with bread and water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt."

5. That was a glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, when he delivered them from the Canaanites, by the hand of Deborah and Barak: Which makes Deborah exultingly to say, *Judges v. 21.* "O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength!" Christ with his heavenly host was engaged in that battle; and therefore it is said, *ver. 20.* "They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The work of God therefore, in this victory and deliverance wrought for Israel, was a type of that victory and deliverance which he will accomplish for his Church in that great battle, that last conflict that the Church shall have with her open enemies, as appears by *Rev. xvi. 16.* (speaking of that great battle) "And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon, i. e. the Mountain of Megiddo; alluding to the place where the battle was fought with the Host of Sisera, *Judges v. 19.* "The Kings came and fought,

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the Kings of Canaan in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo." Which can signify nothing else than that this battle, which Christ and his Church shall have with their enemies, is the antitype of the battle that was fought there. But what a dreadful curse did some of Israel bring upon themselves, by lying still at that time, and not putting to an helping hand? Judg. v. 23. "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." It seems the inhabitants of Meroz were unbelieving concerning this great work, nor would they hearken to Deborah's pretences, nor did it enter into them that such a poor defenceless company should ever prevail against those that were so mighty; they did not acknowledge the hand of God, and therefore stood at a distance, and did nothing to promote the work: But what a bitter curse did they bring upon themselves by it!

It is very probable that one great reason why the inhabitants of Meroz were so unbelieving concerning this work, was, that they argued *a priori*; they did not like the beginning of it, it being a woman that first led the way, and had the chief conduct in the affair; nor could they believe that such despicable instruments, as a company of unarmed slaves, were ever like to effect so great a thing; and pride and unbelief wrought together, in not being willing to follow Deborah to the battle.

6. It was another glorious work of God that he wrought in the victory obtained by Gideon over the Midianites and Amalekites, and the children of the east, when they came up like grasshoppers, a multitude that could not be numbered. This also was a remarkable type of the victory of Christ and his Church over his enemies; as is evident by the manner of it, which was not by human sword or bow, but only by blowing of trumpets, and by lights in earthen vessels. We read that, on this occasion, Gideon called the people together to help in this great affair; and that accordingly great numbers resorted to him, and came to the help of the Lord, Judg. vii. 23, 24. But there were some that  
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were unbelieving, and would not acknowledge the hand of God in that work. They were the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel. Gideon desired their help, when he was pursuing after Zeba and Zalmunna; but they despised his pretences, and his confidence of the Lord's being on his side, to deliver those two great princes into the hands of such a despicable company as he and his three hundred men. God proceeded in this work in a way that was exceeding cross to their pride. And they also refused to own the work, because they argued *a priori*; they could not believe that God would do such great things by such a despicable instrument, one of such a poor mean family in Manasseh, and he the least in his Father's house; and the company that was with him appeared very wretched, being but three hundred men, and they weak and faint. But we see how they suffered for their folly. Gideon, when he returned from the victory, "took them, and taught them with the briers and thorns of the wilderness, and beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city," Judg. viii. This in all probability Gideon did, as directed by the angel of the Lord, that is Christ, that first called him, and sent him forth in this battle, and instructed and directed him in the whole affair.

7. At the return of the ark of God to dwell in Zion, in the midst of the land of Israel, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjath-jearim, we have an account that all the people from Shihor of Egypt, even unto the entering in of Hemath, gathered together, to assist in that great affair: and that all Israel "brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, with shouting, and with sound of cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps," 1 Chron. xiii. 2, 5. and xv. 28. And not only the men, but the women of Israel, the daughters of Zion, appeared as publickly joining in the praises and rejoicings that were on that occasion, 2 Sam. vi. 19. But we read of one of David's wives, even Michal, Saul's daughter, who did not appear with others to rejoice and praise God, but kept away, and stood at a

distance, as disaffected, and disliking the management; she despised and ridiculed the transports and extraordinary manifestations of joy that then were; and the curse that she brought upon herself by it was that of being *barren to the day of her death*.—Let this be a warning to us: Let us take heed, in this day of the bringing up of the ark of God, we do not shew ourselves to be the children of rebellious Saul, by our standing aloof, not joining in praise, and disliking and despising the joys and affections of God's people because they are to so high a degree; and so bring the curse of perpetual barrenness upon our souls.

And that we may be warned not to continue doubting and unbelieving concerning this work, because of the extraordinary degree of it, and the suddenness and swiftness of the accomplishment of the great things that pertain to it; let us consider the example of the unbelieving Lord in Samaria. The Prophet Elisha foretold that the great famine in Samaria should, in one day, be turned into an extraordinary plenty; but the work was too great and too sudden for him to believe: Says he, *If the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?* And the curse that he brought upon himself by it was, that he *saw it with his eyes, and did not eat thereof*; but miserably perished, and was trodden down as the mire of the streets, when others were feasting and rejoicing, 2 Kings vii.

When God redeemed his people from their Babylonish captivity, and they rebuilt Jerusalem, it was, as is universally owned, a remarkable type of the spiritual redemption of God's Church; and particularly, of the Christian Church termed spiritual Jerusalem, in the latter days. But we read of some that opposed the Jews in that affair, that weakened their hands, and despised their hope; "What do these feeble Jews? (say they) will they fortify themselves? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone-wall." Let not us be in any measure like them, lest it be said to us, as Nehemiah said to them, Neh. ii. 20. "We his servants will arise and build;

build; but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." And lest we bring Nehemiah's imprecation upon us, chap. iv. 5. "Cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee; for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders."

8. And as persons will greatly expose themselves to the curse of God, by opposing, or standing at a distance, and keeping silence at such a time as this; so persons who arise, and readily acknowledge God, who cheerfully and vigorously exert themselves to promote this work, put themselves in the way of the Divine Blessing. What a mark of honour does God put upon those in Israel, that *willingly offered themselves, and came to the help of the Lord against the mighty?* And what a particular and honourable notice is taken, in the records of God's word, of those that arose and appeared as David's helpers, to introduce him into the kingdom of Israel? in the 12th chapter of 1 Chron. The host of those that thus came to the help of the Lord, in that work, is compared to the host of God, ver. 22. And the Spirit of God pronounced a special blessing upon them, as those that were co-workers with God, ver. 18. "Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: Peace, Peace be unto thee, and Peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." So we may conclude, that God will much more give his blessing to such as come to the help of the Lord, when he sets his own Son as King on his holy hill of Zion.

The favourable notice that God will take of such as appear to promote the work of God, at such a time as this, may also be argued from such a very particular notice being taken in the sacred records, of those that helped in re-building the wall of Jerusalem, upon the return from the Babylonish captivity, Neh. chap. iii.

9. But above all others, is God's eye upon Ministers of the Gospel, as expecting of them, that they should arise, and acknowledge and honour him in such a work as this, and do their utmost to encourage and promote it: For to promote such a work, is the very



business which they are called and devoted to ; it is the office to which they are appointed, as co-workers with Christ, and as his ambassadors, to awaken and convert sinners ; it is the business they have been solemnly charged with before GOD, angels and men, and that they have given up themselves to, by the most sacred vows. These especially are the officers of Christ's kingdom, that, above all other men upon earth, do represent his person, unto whom Christ has committed the sacred oracles, and holy ordinances, and all his appointed means of grace, to be administered by them ; they are the stewards of his household, into whose hands he has committed its provision ; the immortal souls of men are committed to them, as a flock of sheep are committed to the care of a shepherd : It is expected of them, above all others, that they should have understanding of the times, and know what Israel ought to do ; for it is their business to acquaint themselves with things pertaining to the kingdom of GOD, and to teach and enlighten others therein. We that are employed in the sacred work of the Gospel-Ministry, are the watchmen over the city, to whom GOD has committed the keys of the gates of Zion ; and if, when the rightful King of Zion comes to deliver his people, we refuse to open the gates to him, how greatly shall we expose ourselves to his wrath ? We are appointed to be the Captains of the Host in this war : And if a General will highly resent it in a private soldier, if he refuses to follow him when his banner is displayed, and his trumpet blown ; how much more will he resent it in the Officers of his army ? The Gospel-Ministry, is the principal means that GOD has appointed for carrying on his work in the souls of men ; and it is his will, that whenever that glorious Revival of Religion, and Reformation of the world, is accomplished, it should be principally by the labours of his Ministers ; and therefore how heinous will it be in the sight of GOD, if, when a work of that nature is begun, we appear unbelieving, slow, backward and disaffected ? There was no sort of persons among the Jews that was treated with such manifestations of GOD's great displeasure, for not acknowledging Christ, and the work of his Spirit,

in the days of Christ and his Apostles, as the Ministers of Religion: See how Christ deals with them for it, in the 23d chapter of Matthew; With what gentleness did Christ treat publicans and harlots, in comparison of them?

10. If Ministers preach never so good doctrine, and are never so painful and laborious in their work, yet if, at such a time as this, they shew their people that they are not well affected to this work, they will do their people a great deal more hurt than good: For the very fame of such a work of God, if their people were suffered to believe it to be his work, would be likely to have a greater influence upon their minds, to animate them in religion, than all their labours: And besides, their Ministers opinion will not only beget in them a suspicion of the work they hear of abroad, whereby the mighty hand of God, that appears in it, loses its influence upon their minds; but it will also tend to create a suspicion of every thing of the like nature, that shall appear among themselves, as being something of the same distemper that is become so epidemical in the land; and that is, in effect, to create a suspicion of all vital religion, and to put the people upon talking against it, and discouraging it, wherever it appears, and knocking it in the head as fast as it rises. And we that are Ministers, by looking on this work from year to year with a displeased countenance, keep the sheep from their pasture, instead of doing the part of shepherds to them, by feeding them; and our people had a great deal better be without any settled Minister at all, at such a time as this.

We that are in this sacred office had need to take heed what we do, and how we behave ourselves at this time. If we hinder and stand in the way of the work of God, whose business above all others it is to promote it, how can we expect to partake of the glorious benefits of it? Those awful words of Christ to the Jewish teachers, should be considered by us, Matth. xxiii. 13. "Wo unto you, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven;—for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." If we keep the sheep from their pasture, how shall we

answer

answer it to the great Shepherd, that has bought the flock with his precious blood, and has committed the care of them to us? I would humbly desire of every Minister that has thus long remained disaffected to this work, and has had contemptible thoughts of it, to consider whether he has not hitherto been like Michal, without any child, or at least in a great measure barren and unsuccessful in his work: I pray God it may not be a perpetual barrenness, as hers was.

Ministers should especially take heed of a spirit of envy towards other Ministers, whom God is pleased to make more use of to carry on his work than they; and that they do not, from such a Spirit, reproach some Preacher, that have the true Spirit, as though they were influenced by a false Spirit, or were bereft of reason, and were mad, or were proud, false pretenders, and deserved to be put in prison, or the stocks, as disturbers of the peace; lest they expose themselves to the curse of Shemaiah the Nehelamite, who envied the Prophet Jeremiah, and in this manner reviled him, in his letter to Zephaniah the Priest, Jer. xxix. 26, 27. "The Lord hath made thee Priest in the stead of Jehoiada the Priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a Prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks. Now therefore, why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a Prophet to you?" His curse is denounced in the 32d verse, "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: He shall not have a man to dwell among his people, neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the Lord, because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord."

It is our, wisest way, fully, and without reluctance, to bow to the great God in this work, and to be entirely resigned to him, with respect to the manner in which he carries it on, and the instruments he is pleased to make use of; not sullenly to refuse to acknowledge the work, in the full glory of it, because we have not had so great a hand in promoting it, or shared so largely in the blessings of it as some others; and not to refuse

to give all that honour, that belongs to others as instruments, because they are young, or are upon other accounts much inferior to ourselves and many others, and may appear to us very unworthy that God should put so much honour upon them. If God has a design of carrying on this work, every one, whether he be great or small, must either bow to it, or be broken before it. It may be expected that God's hand will be upon every thing that is high, and stiff, and strong in opposition; as in Isaiah ii. 12, 13, 14, 15. "For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the Cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall.

11. But not only Ministers, but every living soul, is now obliged to arise and acknowledge God in his work, and put to his hand to promote it, as they would not expose themselves to God's curse. All sorts of persons throughout the whole congregation of Israel, great and small, rich and poor, men and women, helped to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness; some in one way, others in another, each one according to his capacity: *Every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his Spirit made willing*; all sorts contributed, and all sorts were employed in that affair, both men and women. And thus it ought to be in this day of building the Tabernacle of God; with such a willing and chearful heart ought every man, woman and child, to do something to promote this work: Those that have not Onyx-stones, or are not able to bring gold or silver, yet may *bring Goats hair*.

We have an account, how that all sorts assisted in the re-building the wall of Jerusalem, not only the proper inhabitants of Jerusalem, but those that dwelt in other parts of the land. And we have an account of one and another, that he repaired *over against his house*, and of one that repaired *over against his chamber*. So now, at this time of re-building the walls of Jerusalem,



Jerusalem, every one ought to promote the work of God within his own sphere, and by doing what belongs to him, in the place God has set him. Men in a private capacity may repair over against their houses and even those that have not the government of families, and have but a part of a house belonging to them should repair each one over against his chamber: And every one should be engaged to do the utmost that lies in his power, labouring with the utmost watchfulness, care and diligence, with united hearts, and united strength, and the greatest readiness, to assist one another in this work; as God's people re-built the wall of Jerusalem, who were so diligent in the work, that they wrought *from break of day till the stars appeared* and did not so much as put off their clothes in the night; and wrought with that care and watchfulness that *with one hand they wrought in the work, and with the other held a weapon*; and were so well united in it that they took care that one should stand ready with trumpet in his hand, that, if any were assaulted in one part, those in the other parts, at the sound of the trumpet, might resort to them, and help them.

We should take heed that at this day we be not like the Gadarenes, who when Christ came into their country, in the exercise of his glorious power, triumphing over a legion of devils, were all alarmed, because they lost their swine by it; and *a whole multitude of the country came, and besought him to depart out of their coasts*. They loved their swine better than Jesus Christ; and had rather have a legion of devils in their country with their herd of swine, than Jesus Christ without them.

12. Instead of coming to the help of the Lord, we shall actually fight against him, if we are abundant in insisting on the blemishes of the work, so as to manifest that we are more forward to take notice of what is amiss, than what is good and glorious in the work. Not but that the errors that are committed ought to be observed and lamented, and the most probable means used to have them amended; but an insisting much upon them, as though it were a pleasing theme, or speaking of them with heat of spirit, or with ridicule,

or an air of contempt, rather than grief for them, has no tendency to correct the errors; but to darken the glory of God's power and grace, and to beget jealousies and ill thoughts in the minds of others. Whatever errors many zealous persons have run into, yet if the work, in the substance of it, be the work of God, then it is a joyful day indeed; it is so in heaven, and ought to be so among God's people on earth. It is a day of great rejoicing with Christ himself, the good Shepherd, when he finds his sheep that was lost. If we therefore are Christ's friends, now it should be a day of great rejoicing with us. If we viewed things in a just light, so great an event as the conversion of such a multitude of sinners, would engage our attention much more than all the imprudencies and irregularities that have been; our hearts would be swallowed up with the glory of this event, and we should have no great disposition to attend to any thing else. The imprudencies and errors of poor feeble worms do not hinder great rejoicing, in the angels of God, over so many poor sinners that have repented; and it will be an argument of something very ill, if they prevent our rejoicing.

God doubtless now expects, that all sorts of persons in New-England, ministers and people, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, should take great notice of his hand in this mighty work of his grace, and should appear to acknowledge his glory in it, and greatly to rejoice in it, every one doing his utmost, in the place that God has set them in, to promote it. And God, according to his wonderful patience, seems to be still waiting, to give us opportunity thus to acknowledge and honour him: But, if we finally refuse, there is not the least reason to expect any other than that his awful curse will pursue us, and that the pourings out of his wrath will be proportionable to the pourings out of his grace, which we have despised.

## P A R T III.

*Shewing many instances, wherein the Subjects, or Promoters of this Work, have been injuriously blamed.*

IN treating of the Methods to be taken to promote this Work, I would, 1. Take notice, wherein fault has been found with the conduct of the subjects, or promoters of it, beyond just cause. 2. I would shew what things ought to be corrected or avoided. And 3. What ought to be done to promote it.

*First*, I would take notice of some things, at which offence has been taken without or beyond just cause.

1. One thing that has been complained of is, Ministers addressing themselves to the *Affections* of the hearers, and striving to raise their *Passions*, rather by earnestness in voice and gesture, than by clear reasoning: by which means, it is objected, the affections are moved, without a proportionable enlightening of the understanding.

To which I would say, I am far from thinking that it is not very profitable for Ministers, in their preaching, to explain the Doctrines of Religion, unravel the difficulties that attend them, to confirm them with strength of reason and argumentation, and also to observe some method and order herein: Yet I believe the objection made, of affections raised without enlightening the understanding, is in a great measure built on a mistake, and confused notions that some have about the nature and cause of the affections, and the manner in which they depend on the understanding. All affections are raised either by light in the understanding, or by some error and delusion in the understanding: For all affections certainly arise from some apprehension in the understanding; and that apprehension must either be agreeable to truth, or not: If it be an apprehension agreeable to truth, then it is raised by *Light in the understanding*. Therefore the thing to be enquired is, Whether the apprehensions of divine things, that are raised in people's minds by these affectionate Preachers, be apprehensions that are agreeable to truth, or whether they are mistakes. If the former, then

then the affections are raised the way they should be, viz. by informing the mind, or conveying light to the understanding. They go away with a wrong notion, that think those Preachers cannot affect their hearers by enlightening their understandings, who do not do it by such a distinct handling of doctrinal points, as depends on human discipline, or the strength of reason, and tends to enlarge their hearers learning, and speculative knowledge in divinity. The manner of preaching without this, may tend very much to set divine things in a right view, and to give the hearers such apprehensions of them as are agreeable to Truth, and such impressions on their hearts as are answerable to the real nature of things.

And not only the words spoken, but the manner of speaking, has a great tendency to this. An affectionate way of preaching about the great things of Religion, has no tendency to beget false apprehensions of them; but a much greater to beget true apprehensions of them, than a moderate, dull, indifferent way of speaking. Affection and earnestness in the manner of delivery, if it be very great indeed, yet if it be agreeable to the nature of the subject, not beyond proportion to its importance, and there be no appearance of its being feigned or forced, has so much the greater tendency to beget true apprehensions in the minds of the hearers, of the subject spoken of, and so to enlighten the understanding: And that, for this reason, That such a manner of speaking of those things does, in fact, truly represent them. If the subject be worthy of very great affection, then a speaking of it with very great affection is the truest representation of it, and therefore has most tendency to beget true ideas of it. Nor are Ministers to be blamed for raising the affections of their hearers too high, if that which they are affected with be worthy of affection, and their affections are not raised beyond a proportion to their importance or worthiness.

I know it has long been fashionable to despise an earnest and pathetic way of preaching; and they only have been valued as Preachers, that have shown the greatest extent of learning, and strength of reason,



and correctness of method and language : But I humbly conceive it has been for want of understanding or duly considering human nature, that such preaching has been thought to have the greatest tendency to answer the ends of preaching. And the experience of the present and past ages abundantly confirms the same. Speculative knowledge in Divinity is not what is so much needed by our people as something else. Men may abound in this sort of light, and have no heat : How much has there been of this sort of knowledge in this age ? Was there ever an age, wherein strength and penetration of reason, extent of learning, exactness of distinction, correctness of stile and clearness of expression, did so abound ? And yet, was there ever an age, wherein there has been so little sense of the evil of sin, so little love to God, heavenly-mindedness and holiness of life, among the professors of the true Religion ? Our people do not so much need to have their heads stored, as to have their hearts touched ; and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching that has the greatest tendency to do this.

Those texts, Isa. lvii. 1. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." And, Ezek. vi. 11. "Thus saith the Lord God, smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel !" will justify a great degree of Pathos, of zeal and fervency in preaching the word of God : They may indeed be abused ; but, let us interpret them how we will, they at least imply, that a most affectionate and earnest manner of delivery, in many cases, becomes a Preacher of God's word.

2. Another thing that some Ministers have been blamed for, I think unjustly, is speaking terror to them that are already under great terrors. Indeed if they go about to terrify persons with that which is not true, or to affright them by representing their case worse than it is, or in any respect otherwise than it is, they are to be condemned ; but if they terrify them only by still holding forth more light, and giving them to understand more of the truth of their case, they are altogether

altogether to be justified. When sinners are awakened by the Spirit of God, it is by light imparted to the conscience, enabling them to see their case as it is; and, if more light be let in, it will terrify them more: But Ministers are not therefore to be blamed, that they endeavour to hold forth more light to the conscience, and do not rather alleviate the pain they are under, by intercepting and obstructing the light that shines already. Why should we be afraid to bring persons, that are in an infinitely miserable condition, into the light, for fear it should terrify them? The more we bring sinners into the light, while the light is terrible to them, the more likely it is that by and by the light will be joyful to them. The ease, peace and comfort, that natural men enjoy, have their foundation in darkness and blindness; therefore as that darkness vanishes, and light comes in, their peace vanishes, and they are terrified: But that is no good argument why we should endeavour to hold them darkness, that we may uphold their comfort. The truth is, as long as men do not savingly believe, however strict and laborious they may be in Religion, they have the wrath of God abiding on them; they are his enemies, and the children of the devil: And, seeing this is the truth, they should be told so, that they may be sensible what their case indeed is.

To blame a Minister for thus declaring the Truth to those who are under awakenings, and not immediately administering comfort to them, is like blaming a Surgeon, because when he has begun to thrust in his lancet, whereby his patient shrinks and cries out with anguish, he is so cruel that he will not stay his hand, but goes on to thrust it in further, till he comes to the core of the wound. Such a compassionate Physician, who, as soon as his patient began to cry, should withdraw his hand, and immediately apply a plaister to skin over the wound, and leave the core untouched, would heal the hurt slightly, crying, *Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace.*

Indeed something else besides terror is to be preached to them whose consciences are awakened; the Gospel is to be preached to them. Sinners, at the same time that

they are told how miserable their case is, should be earnestly invited to come and accept of a Saviour: But this is to induce them to escape from the misery of the condition they are now in, not to make them think it is less miserable than it is, or at all to abate their uneasiness and distress, while they are in it; that would be the way to fasten them in it, and not to excite them to flee from it. Comfort, in one sense, is to be held forth to sinners under awakenings of conscience; i. e. Comfort is to be offered to them in Christ, on condition of their fleeing from *their present miserable state* to him; but comfort is not to be administered to them, *in their present state*, as any thing that they have now any title to. No comfort is to be administered to them, from any thing in *them*, any of their qualifications, prayers or other performances, past, present or future; but Ministers should, in such cases, strive to their utmost to take all such comforts from them. A person that sees himself ready to sink into hell, is ready to strive, some way or other, to lay GOD under some obligation to him; but he is to be beat off from every thing of that nature, though it greatly increases his terror, to see himself wholly destitute, on every side, of any refuge, or any thing of his own to lay hold of; as a man that sees himself in danger of drowning, is in terror, and endeavours to catch hold on every twig within his reach, and he that pulls away those twigs from him increases his terror; yet if they are insufficient to save him, and by being in his way prevent his looking to that which will save him, to pull them away is necessary to save his life.

If sinners are in distress, from any mistake they are under, that is to be removed: For instance, if they are in terror, from an apprehension that they have committed the unpardonable sin, such terrors have no tendency to do them any good; for they are from temptation, not from conviction: But that terror which arises from conviction, or a sight of truth, is to be increased; for those that are most awakened, have great remaining stupidity; they have a sense of but little of that which is; and it is from remaining blindness and darkness that they see no more, and that remaining

maining blindness is a disease that we ought to endeavour to cure. I am not afraid to tell sinners, that are most sensible of their misery, that their case is indeed as miserable as they think it to be, and a thousand times more so; for this is the Truth. Some may be ready to say, that though it be the Truth, yet it seems not to be seasonable then: But it seems to me, such Truth is never more seasonable than at such a time, when Christ is beginning to open the eyes of conscience. Ministers ought to act as co-workers with him; to take that opportunity, and to the utmost to improve that advantage; and when the light has begun to shine, then to remove all obstacles, and use all proper means that it may come in more fully. And experience abundantly shews, that to take this course is not of an hurtful tendency: I have seen, in very many instances, the happy effects of it; and never knew any ill consequence, in case of real conviction, and when distress has only been from thence.

I know of but one case wherein the Truth ought to be with-held from sinners in distress of conscience, and that is the case of melancholy: And it is not to be with-held from them then, because the Truth tends to do them hurt, but because, if we speak the Truth to them, sometimes they will be led into error by it, through that strange disposition there is in them to take things wrong; unless it be spoken with abundance of caution and prudence, and consideration of their disposition and circumstances. But the most awful Truth of God's word ought not to be with-held from public congregations, because it may happen that some such persons may be in it; any more than the Bible is to be with-held from the Christian World, because it is manifest there are many who exceedingly abuse the awful things contained in the Scripture, to their own wounding.

What has more especially raised a loud cry against some Preachers, is their frightening poor children with talk of hell and damnation. But if those that complain of this, really believe that all are by nature the children of wrath, and heirs of hell; such a cry betrays great weakness and inconsideration. As innocent



as children seem to be to us, yet, if they are without Christ, they are not so in God's sight; but are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons; and they are naturally very senseless and stupid, being *born as the wild ass's colt*. Why then should we conceal the truth from them? Will those children that have been dealt tenderly with in this respect, and lived and died insensible of their misery till they come to feel it in hell, ever thank their parents for their tenderness, in not letting them know what they were in danger of? If parents love towards their children was not blind, it would affect them much more to see them exposed to eternal burnings, and yet senseless, than to see them suffer the distress of that awakening that is necessary in order to their escape from them. A child that has a dangerous wound may need the painful lancet, as well as grown persons; and that would be a foolish pity, in such a case, that should hold back the lancet, and throw away the life. — I have seen the happy effects of dealing plainly with children in the concerns of their souls, without sparing them at all, in many instances; and never knew any ill consequences of it, in any one instance.

3. Another thing that has been blamed, is having so frequent religious meetings, and spending so much time in religion. And indeed, there are none of the externals of religion but what are capable of excess. But yet, this objection of persons spending too much time in religion, has been in the general groundless. Though worldly business must be done, and persons ought not to neglect the business of their particular callings; yet it is to the honour of God, that a people should be so much in outward acts of Religion, as to shew a great engagedness of mind in it, as the main business of life: And especially at a time when God appears unusually present with a people in wonderful works of power and mercy. And as to the grand objection of, *Six days shalt thou labour*; all that the objectors themselves understand by it is, that we may follow our secular labours in those six days, and ought to be diligent in them: Not but sometimes we may turn from them, even within those six days, to keep a day

day of fasting or thanksgiving; and that more frequently or rarely, as God's Providence and the state of things shall call us.

But, if the matter be justly considered, it will be found, that the country has lost no time from their temporal affairs by the late Revival of Religion, but rather gained time; and that more time has been saved from idleness and unprofitable visits, vain talk, and needless diversions, than has been spent in extraordinary Religion; and probably five times as much has been saved in person's estates, at the tavern, and in their apparel, as has been spent by religious meetings.

That the great complaint that is made against so much time spent in Religion, cannot be in general from a real concern that God may be honoured, is very manifest from this, that there is a much more zealous outcry made against this extraordinary Religion, than was before against so much time spent in taverns, vain company, night-walking, and other things, which both wasted our time and substance, and injured our moral virtue.

The frequent preaching that has lately been, has in a particular manner been objected against. It is objected, that, when Sermons are heard so very often, one Sermon tends to thrust out another; so that persons lose the benefit of all: They say, two or three Sermons in a week is as much as men can remember and digest. But such objections, if they be not from an enmity against Religion, are for want of duly considering the way that Sermons usually profit an auditory. The main benefit that is obtained by preaching, is by impression made upon the mind in the time of it, and not by any effect that arises afterwards by a remembrance of what was delivered. And though an after-remembrance of what was heard in a Sermon is oftentimes very profitable; yet, for the most part, that remembrance is from an impression the words made on the heart in the time of it; and the memory profits, as it renews and increases that impression. Now a frequent inculcating the more important things of religion in preaching, has no tendency to raze out such impressions, but to increase them, and fix them deeper  
and

and deeper in the mind, as is found by experience. It is never used to be objected against, that persons upon the Sabbath, after they have heard two sermons that day, should go home, and spend the remaining part of the Sabbath in reading the Scriptures, and printed sermons; which, in proportion as it has a tendency to affect the mind at all, has as much of a tendency to drive out what they have heard, as if they heard another sermon preached. It was the practice of the Apostles to preach every day, in places where they went; yea, though sometimes they continued long in one place, Acts ii. 42. 46. Acts xix. 8, 9, 10. They did not avoid preaching one day, for fear they should thrust out of the minds of their hearers what they had delivered the day before; nor did Christians avoid going every day to hear, for fear of any such bad effect.

4. Another thing, wherein some Ministers have been much blamed, is, for making so much of outcries, faintings, and other bodily effects; speaking of them as tokens of the presence of God, and arguments of the success of preaching; seeming to strive to bring a congregation to that pass, and to rejoice in it, yea, to bless God when they see these effects.

Concerning this I would observe, in the *first* place, that there are many things, with respect to cryings-out, falling down, &c. that are charged on Ministers, that they are not guilty of. Some would have it, that they speak of these things as *certain* evidences of a work of the Spirit of God on the heart; or that they esteem these bodily effects themselves to be the Work of God, as though the Spirit of God took hold of and agitated the bodies of men; and some are charged with making these things *essential*, and supposing that persons cannot be converted without them; whereas I never yet could see the person that held any of these things.

But for speaking of such effects as *probable* tokens of God's presence, and arguments of the success of preaching, it seems to me they are not to be blamed; because I think they are so indeed: And therefore when I see them excited by preaching the important truths

of

of God's word, urged and inforced by proper arguments and motives, or as consequent on other means that are good, I do not scruple to rejoice in them, and bless God for them; and that for this (as I think) good reason, viz. That from time to time, upon proper enquiry and examination, and observation of the consequences, I have found, these are all evidences that the persons in whom those effects appear, are then under the influences of God's Spirit. Cryings-out, in such a manner, and with such circumstances, as I have seen them from time to time, are as much evidence to me, of the general cause they proceed from, as language: I have learned the meaning of it the same way that persons learn the meaning of language, by use and experience. I confess that when I hear a great crying-out in a congregation, in the manner that I have heard it, when those things are spoken that are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it, much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a shew of affection by weeping; and that because, when there have been those outcries, I have found from time to time a much greater and more excellent effect. To rejoice that the Work of God is carried on calmly, without much ado, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power, or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit: For though the degree of the influence of the Spirit of God, on *particular persons*, is by no means to be judged of by the degree of external appearances, because of the different constitutions, tempers and circumstances of men; yet, if there be a very powerful influence of the Spirit on a mixed multitude, it will cause some way or other a great visible commotion.

And as to Ministers aiming at such effects; I suppose none aim at it any otherwise, than as they strive to raise the affections of their hearers to such an height as often appears therein; and if those affections are good, and it be found by experience, that such a degree of them commonly has a good effect, I think they are to be justified in so doing.

5. Again, some Ministers have been blamed for keeping persons together, that have been under great affections,



fections, which have appeared in such extraordinary outward manifestations. Many think this promotes confusion; that persons in such circumstances do but disturb each others minds, and disturb the minds of others; that therefore it is best they should be dispersed; and that when any in a congregation are seized, that they cannot forbear outward manifestation of it, they should be removed, that others may not be diverted.

But I cannot but think that those that thus object upon quite wrong notions of things: For though persons ought to take heed that they do not make an uproar without necessity; yet the unavoidable manifestation of strong religious affections are found by experience to have an excellent and durable effect: And so to contrive and order things, that others may have opportunity and advantage to observe them, has been found to be blessed, as a great means to promote the Work of God; and to prevent their being in the way of observation, is to prevent the effect of that which God makes use of as a principal means of carrying on his Work at such a time, viz. Example; which is often spoken of in Scripture, as one of the chief means by which God would carry on his work in the time of the prosperity of Religion in the latter days. In Zech. ix. 15, 16. those that in the latter days should be filled in an extraordinary manner with the Holy Spirit, so as to appear in outward manifestations, and making a noise are spoken of as those that God, in these uncommon circumstances, will set up to the view of others, as a prize or ensign, by their example to animate others as men gather about an ensign, and run for a prize, or a crown, set up in their view. The words are; "And they shall drink and make a noise as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar. And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land." Whereas those that make this objection, instead of suffering this prize or ensign to be in public view, are for having it removed, and hid in some corner.

6. Another

6. Another thing that gives great disgust to many, is the disposition that persons shew, under great affections, to speak so much, and, with such earnestness and vehemence, to be setting forth the greatness and importance of eternal things; and to be so passionately warning, inviting and intreating others.

I am far from thinking that such a disposition should be wholly without any limits or regulation: But yet it seems to me, that such a disposition in general is what both Reason and Scripture will justify. Those that are offended at such things, as though they were unreasonable, are not just: Upon examination it will probably be found, that they have one rule of reasoning about temporal things, and another about spiritual things. They will not at all wonder, if a person on some very great and affecting occasion, of extraordinary danger or great joy, is disposed to speak much, and with great earnestness, especially to those to whom he is united in the bonds of dear affection. And therefore, if they were just, why would they not allow it in spiritual things? And much *more* in them, agreeable to their vastly greater importance and more affecting nature?

That a very great sense of the importance of the things of Religion, and the danger sinners are in, should sometimes cause an almost insuperable disposition to warn others, is agreeable to Jer. vi. 10, 11. "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged, with him that is full of days."

But it is said by some, that the people who are the subjects of this work, when they get together, several in a room talking at the same time, make a noise just like a company of drunken persons. On which I would observe, that it is foretold that God's people should do so, in that fore-mentioned place, Zech. ix.

15, 16, 17. which I shall now take more particular notice of: The words are as follows; "The Lord of Hosts shall defend them, and they shall devour and subdue with sling-stones, and they shall drink and make noise as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar. And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown lifted up as an ensign upon his land. For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." The words are very remarkable: Here it is foretold, that at the time when Christ shall set up a universal kingdom upon earth (v. 20.) the children of Zion shall drink, till they are filled like the vessels of the Sanctuary: And, if we would know what they shall be thus filled with, the prophecy explains itself: they shall be filled as the vessels of the Sanctuary that contained the drink-offering, which was wine. And yet the words imply, that it shall not literally be wine, but that they shall be filled with that, which the wine of the drink-offering represented, or was a type of, which is the Holy Spirit, as well as the blood of Christ: that new wine that is drunk in our heavenly Father's kingdom: They shall be filled with the Spirit, which the Apostle sets in opposition to a being drunk with wine, Eph. v. 18. It is here foretold, that the children of Zion, in the latter days, should be filled with that which should make them cheerful, and cause them to make a noise as through wine, and by which they that are thus filled shall be as the stones of a crown lifted up as an ensign upon God's land, being made joyful in the extraordinary manifestations of the beauty and love of Christ; as it follows, *How great is his goodness! and how great is his beauty!* And it is further remarkable that it is here foretold, it should be thus especially amongst young people; *Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.* It would be ridiculous to understand this of literal bread and wine: Without doubt, the same spiritual blessings are signified by bread and wine here, which were represented by Melchizedek's bread and wine, and are signified

nified by the bread and wine in the Lord's-Supper. One of the marginal readings is, *shall make the young men to speak*; which is agreeable to that in Canticles, of the *best wines causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak*.

We ought not be like the unbelieving Jews in Christ's time, who were disgusted both with crying out with distress, and with joy. When the poor blind man cried out before all the multitude, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" and continued instantly thus doing, "the multitude rebuked him that he should hold his tongue," Mark x. 46, 47, 48. and Luke xviii. 38, 39. They looked upon it to be a very indecent noise that he made; a thing very ill becoming him, to cause his voice to be heard so much, and so loud. And when Christ made his solemn entry into Jerusalem, the whole multitude of the Disciples, of all sorts, especially young people, began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, *Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. But the Pharisees said to Christ, Master, rebuke thy Disciples.* They did not understand such great transports of joy; it seemed to them a very unsuitable and indecent noise and clamour that they made, a confused uproar, many crying out together as though they were out of their wits; they wondered that Christ would tolerate it. But what says Christ? *I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.*

7. Another thing that some have found fault with, is so much singing in religious meetings. Objecting against such a thing as this, seems to arise from a suspicion already established of this work: They doubt of the pretended extraordinary love and joy that attend this work, and so find fault with the manifestations of them. If they thought persons had truly an extraordinary degree of divine love, and heavenly rejoicing in God, I suppose they would not wonder at their having a disposition to be much in praise. They will not object against the saints and angels in heaven singing praises and hallelujahs to God, without ceasing day or night; and therefore doubtless will allow that the more



the saints on earth are like them in their dispositions; the more they will be disposed to do like them.

But what is more especially found fault with in the singing that is now practised, is making use of hymns of human composition. And I am far from thinking that the Book of Psalms should be thrown by in our public worship, but that it should always be used in the Christian Church to the end of the world: But I know of no obligation we are under to confine ourselves to it. And it is really needful that we should have some other Songs besides the Psalms of David: It is unreasonable to suppose that the Christian Church should for ever, in her praises of God and the Lamb, be confined only to the words of the Old Testament, wherein all the greatest and most glorious things of the Gospel, that are infinitely the greatest subjects of her praise, are spoken of under a veil, and not so much as the name of our glorious Redeemer ever mentioned, but in some dark figure, or as hid under some type.

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#### P A R T IV.

*Shewing what things are to be corrected or avoided, in promoting this Work.*

**H**AVING thus observed some instances wherein the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of this work, or have been zealous to promote it, has been objected against without or beyond just cause; I proceed now, in the

II. Place, to shew what things ought to be corrected or avoided.

1. If we look back into the History of the Church of God, we may observe it has been a common device of the devil to overset a Revival of Religion, when he can keep men quiet no longer, then to drive them to excesses and extravagancies. He holds them back as long as he can; but when he can do it no longer, then he will push them on, and, if possible, run them upon their heads. And it has been by this means chiefly that he has been successful, in several instances, to overthrow

overthrow promising beginnings: Yea, the principal means by which he was successful, by degrees to overthrow that grand religious Revival of the world, that was in the primitive ages of Christianity, and in a manner to overthrow the Christian Church through the earth, and to make way for and bring on the great Antichristian Apostacy, that master-piece of all the devil's works, was to employ the indiscreet zeal of Christians, to drive them into those three extremes of *Enthusiasm*, *Superstition*, and *Severity towards Opposers*; which should be an everlasting warning to the Christian Church.

Though the devil will do his diligence to stir up the open enemies of Religion, yet, in a time of Revival of Religion, his main strength is tried with the friends of it; in his attempts upon them, to mislead them. And one truly zealous person, in the time of such an event, that seems to have a great hand in the affair, and draws the eyes of many upon him, may do more (through Satan's being too subtil for him) to hinder the work, than an hundred great, and strong, and open opposers.

The errors of the friends of the Work of God, and especially of the great promoters of it, give vast advantage to the enemies of such a work. Indeed there are many things that are no errors, but are only duties faithfully done, that wound such persons more than real errors: But yet one real error gives opposers as much advantage, and hinders and clogs the work as much as ten supposed ones. Real errors do not fret and gall the enemies of Religion so much as those things that are strictly right; but they encourage them more, they give them liberty, and open a gap for them; so that some who before kept their enmity burning in their own bowels, and durst not show themselves, will on such an occasion take courage, and give themselves vent; and their rage will be like that of an enemy let loose; and those that lay still before, having nothing to say but what they would be ashamed of, when they have such a weapon put into their hands, will fight with all violence. And indeed, the enemies of Religion would not know what to do for weapons

to fight with, were it not for the errors of the friends of it. And besides, in real errors, things that are truly disagreeable to the rule of God's word, we cannot expect that God will appear on our side, as if our errors were only supposed ones.

Since therefore the errors of the friends and promoters of such a glorious work are of such dreadful consequence; and seeing the devil is so assiduous and subtil in his attempts with them, and has thereby been so successful to overthrow Religion heretofore; certainly such persons ought to be exceeding circumspect and vigilant, diffident and jealous of themselves, and humbly dependent on the guidance of the good Shepherd. 1 Pet. iv. 4. "Be sober, and watch unto prayer." Chap. v. 8. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about." For persons to go on resolutely, in a kind of heat and vehemence, despising admonition and correction, is directly contrary to the import of these words, be *sober*, be *vigilant*.

2. It is a mistake I have observed in some, by which they have been greatly exposed, that they think they are in no danger of being misled by the devil, because they are near to God; and so have no jealous eye upon themselves, and neglect vigilance and circumspection. They say, they do not think that God will leave them to dishonour him, as long as they keep near to him. And I believe so too, as long as they keep near to God in that respect, that they maintain an universal diligent watch, and avoid sin and snares with diffidence in themselves, and humble dependance and prayerfulness: But not merely because they are near to God, in that respect, that they are now receiving refreshing views of him; if at the same time they are not jealous over their own hearts, by reason of its remaining blindness and a subtil adversary. It is a grand error for persons to think they are out of danger, even in their highest spiritual joy. However highly we may be favoured with divine comforts, yet, as long as we are in the world, we are in the enemies country; and therefore that direction of Christ to his Disciples is never out of date; "Watch and pray always, that

you

you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man," Luke xxi. 36. For though God stands ready to protect his people, especially those that are near to him; yet he expects great care and labour of all, and that we should put on the whole armour of God, that we may stand in the evil day: And whatever spiritual privileges we are raised to, we have no warrant to expect protection in any other way; for God has appointed this whole life, as a state of labour, to be all as a race or battle; the state wherein we shall have no need of watching and fighting is reserved for another world. I have known it in abundance of instances, that the devil has come in very remarkably, even in the midst of the most exalted frames: It may seem a great mystery that it should be so; but it is no greater mystery than that Christ should be carried into the wilderness, immediately after the heavens had been opened to him, and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon him, and he heard that joyful voice from the Father, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* In like manner a Christian is oftentimes carried into a wilderness, presently after heaven has been as it were opened to the soul, and the Holy Ghost has descended upon it like a dove, and God has been sweetly owning the believer, and testifying his favour to him as his beloved child.

It is therefore a great error in some, that they are fixed in their way, in things that others account errors, and will not hearken to admonition and counsel, but are confident they are in the right, because they have great degrees of the Spirit of God. There were some such in the Apostles days. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, was sensible that some of them would not be easily convinced that they had been in any error, because they looked upon themselves as *spiritual*, or full of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. xiv. 37, 38. But, saith he, "If any man think himself to be a Prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandment of the Lord; but if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."



And although those that are spiritual amongst us have no infallible Apostle to admonish them, yet let me intreat them, to weigh what may be said to them by one that is their hearty and fervent friend, concerning the errors that have been committed, or that we may be exposed to, in methods or practices that have been, or may be, fallen into, by the zealous friends or promoters of this great Work of God.

3. In speaking of the errors that have been, or that we are in danger of, I would,

*First*, Take notice of the causes whence the errors that attend a great Revival of Religion usually arise; and, of some errors that arise from each of those causes.

*Secondly*, Observe some errors that have been owing to the influence of several of those causes conjunctly.

As to the first of these, the errors that attend a great Revival of Religion usually arise from these three things;

1. Undiscerned spiritual Pride.
2. Wrong Principles.
3. Ignorance of Satan's Devices.

The first and worst cause of errors, in such a state of things, is *spiritual Pride*. This is the main door by which the devil comes in. It is the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit, to darken the mind and mislead the judgment. This is the main handle by which the devil has hold of religious persons, and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces, to clog and hinder a Work of God. It is by this that the mind defends itself in other errors, and guards itself against light, by which it might be corrected and reclaimed. The spiritually proud man is full of light already, he does not need instruction, and is ready to despise the offer of it.

I know that many things are injuriously laid to the pride of those that are zealous in the cause of God. When any person appears zealous in Religion, exerts himself more than others do, or seems to be distinguished with success, ten to one but those that are about him will suspect (whether they have cause or no) that he is very proud of his goodness, and that he affects to have it thought that no body is so good as he. Those that are themselves cold and dead, and especially such as never had any experience of the power of god-

liness

liness on their own hearts, are ready to entertain such thoughts of the best Christians, which arises from a secret enmity against vital piety.

But then zealous Christians should take heed that this do not prove a snare to them, and that the devil do not take advantage from it, to blind their eyes from beholding what is indeed in their hearts, and make them think, because they are charged with pride wrongfully, in many things, that therefore it is so in every thing. Alas, how much pride have the best of us in our hearts! It is the worst part of the body of sin and death: It is the first sin that ever entered into the universe, and the last that is rooted out.

The corruption of nature may all be resolved into two things, *Pride* and *Worldly-mindedness*, the *Devil* and the *Beast*: These are the two pillars of Dagon's temple, on which the whole house leans. But the former of these is every way the worst part; it is the first-born Son of the Devil, and his image in the heart of man chiefly consists in it; it is the last thing in a sinner that is overborn by conviction, in order to conversion; and it is most like the Devil its Father, in a serpentine deceitfulness; it lies deepest, and is most active, most ready secretly to mix itself with every thing.

It takes occasion to arise from every thing; it perverts and abuses every thing, and even the exercises of real grace, and real humility, as an occasion to exert itself: It is a sin that has, as it were, many lives; if you kill it, it will live still; if you mortify and suppress it in one shape, it rises in another; if you think it is all gone, it is there still: There are a great many kinds of it, that lie in different forms and shapes, one under another. We had need therefore to have the greatest watch imaginable over our hearts with respect to this matter, and to cry most earnestly to the great searcher of hearts for his help. *He that trusts his own heart is a fool.*

Spiritual pride in its own nature is so secret, that it is not so well discerned by immediate intuition on the thing itself, as by the fruits of it; some of which I would

would mention, together with the contrary fruits of humility.

4. Spiritual pride disposes to speak of other persons sins, their enmity against God and his people, the miserable delusion of hypocrites and their enmity against vital piety, and the deadness of some Christians, with bitterness, or with laughter and levity, and an air of contempt; whereas humility disposes, either to be silent about them, or to speak of them with grief and pity.

Spiritual pride is apt to suspect others; whereas an humble man is most jealous of himself; he is so suspicious of nothing in the world as he is of his own heart. He has so much to do at home, and sees so much evil in his own heart, and is so concerned about it, that he is not apt to be very busy with others hearts; he complains most of himself, and cries out of his own coldness, and is ready to hope that there is no body but what has more love and thankfulness to God than he.

In a contrariety to this, it has been the manner in some places, or at least the manner of some persons, to speak of almost every thing that they see amiss in others, in the most harsh, severe and terrible language. It is frequent with them to say of others opinions or conduct or advice, or of their coldness, their silence, their caution, their prudence, that they are from the devil, or from hell; that such a thing is devilish, or hellish, or cursed, and that such persons are serving the devil, or the devil is in them; so that the words *Devil* and *Hell* are almost continually in their mouths. And such kind of language they will commonly use, not only towards wicked men, but towards them that they themselves allow to be the true children of God, and also towards Ministers and others that are much their superiors. And they look upon it as a virtue and high attainment thus to behave themselves. *Oh, say they, we must be plain and bold for Christ, we must declare war against sin wherever we see it, we must not mince the matter in the cause of GOD, and when speaking for Christ.*

What

What a strange device of the devil is here, to overthrow all Christian meekness and gentleness, and even all shew and appearance of it, under a cloke of high sanctity and zeal and boldness for Christ! And it is a remarkable instance of the weakness of the human mind, and how much too cunning the devil is for us!

The grand defence of this way of talking is, that they say no more than what is true, and that true Christians know it to be true, and therefore will not be offended, to hear such expressions. It is only (say they) hypocrites, that are provoked and feel their enmity rise on such an occasion.

But it is a grand mistake to think that we may commonly use concerning one another all such language as is according to strict truth. It is really true, that every kind of sin, and every degree of it, is devilish and from hell, and is cursed, hellish, and condemned or damned. But shall a child therefore from time to time, use such language concerning an eminently holy father or mother, as, that the devil is in them; that they have such and such devilish cursed dispositions; that they commit every day hundreds of hellish, damned acts; and that they are cursed dogs, hell hounds and devils? And shall the meanest of the people be justified, in using such language concerning Magistrates, or eminent Ministers? I hope no body has gone to this height: But the same pretences of boldness, and declared war against sin, will as well justify these things, as the things they are actually made use of to justify. If we proceed in such a manner, what a face will be introduced upon the Church of Christ? What a sound shall we bring into the house of God, into the family of his dear children? How far off shall we soon banish that lovely appearance of humility, sweetness, gentleness, mutual honour, benevolence, complacence, and an esteem of others above themselves, which ought to clothe the children of God all over? Not but that Christians should watch over one another, and in any wise reprove one another, and do it plainly and faithfully; but it does not thence follow that dear brethren in the family of God, in rebuking one another, should  
use



use worse language than Michael the archangel did use when rebuking the devil himself.

Christians, that are but fellow worms, ought at least to treat one another with as much humility and gentleness as Christ, that is infinitely above them, treats them. But how did Christ treat his disciples when they were so cold towards him, and so regardless of him, at the time when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and he in a dismal agony was crying and sweating blood for them? One would think then was proper time, if ever, to have reprov'd them for devilish, hellish, cursed and damned slothfulness and deadness. But after what manner does Christ reprove them? Behold his astonishing gentleness? *What, could ye not watch with me one hour?* The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And how did he treat Peter when he was ashamed of his master, while he was made a mocking-stock and a spitting-stock for him? Why, he looked upon him with a look of love, and melted his heart.

5. Again, spiritual pride often disposes persons to singularity in external appearance, to affect a singular way of speaking, to use a different sort of Dialect from others, or to be singular in voice, or air of countenance or behaviour: But he that is humble, though he will be firm to his duty, however singular he is in it; yet delights not in singularity, for singularity's sake; but on the contrary is disposed to become all things to all men, and to yield to others, and conform to them and please them, in every thing but sin. Spiritual pride commonly occasions a certain stiffness and inflexibility in persons, in their own judgment and their own ways; whereas the humble person, though he be inflexible in his duty, and in those things wherein God's honour is concerned; and with regard to temptation to those things he apprehends to be sinful, though in never so small a degree, he is like a brazen wall; yet in other things he is of a pliable disposition, ready to pay deference to others opinions, to comply with their inclinations, and has a heart that is tender and flexible, like a little child.

Spiritual

Spiritual pride disposes persons to affect separation, to stand at a distance from others, as better than they; but on the contrary, the humble Christian is ready to look upon himself as not worthy that others should be united to him: And though he will not be a companion with one that is visibly Christ's enemy, yet his universal benevolence delights in union with his fellow creatures, and will maintain it as much as he possibly can, without giving open countenance to iniquity, or wounding his own soul.

The humble Christian is as it were clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of Spirit and behaviour, and with a soft, sweet, condescending, winning air and deportment; these things are just like garments to him, he is *clothed with humility*, he *puts on, as the Elect of GOD, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.*

Humility has no such thing as roughness, or contempt, or fierceness, or bitterness in its nature; it makes a person like a little child, harmless and innocent, and that none need to be afraid of; or like a lamb, destitute of all bitterness, wrath, anger and clamour.

With such a Spirit as this ought especially zealous Ministers of the Gospel to be clothed, and those that God is pleased to employ as instruments of promoting his work: They ought indeed to be explicit in preaching the word of God, without mincing the matter at all; in handling the sword of the Spirit, as the Ministers of the Lord of Hosts; they ought not to be mild and gentle, they are not to be gentle and moderate in searching and awakening the conscience, but should be Sons of Thunder. The Word of God, which is in itself sharper than any two-edged sword, ought not to be sheathed by them, but so used that its sharp edges may have their full effect, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow; (provided they do it without judging particular persons, leaving it to conscience and the Spirit of God to make the application;) but all their conversation should favour of nothing but lowliness and good-will, love and pity to all

all mankind; so that such a Spirit should be like a sweet odour diffused around them wherever they go, or like a light shining about them, their faces should as it were shine with it; they should be like lions to guilty consciences, but like lambs to men's persons. This would have no tendency to prevent the awakening of men's consciences, but on the contrary would have a very great tendency to awaken them; it would make way for the sharp sword to enter; it would remove the obstacles, and make a naked breast for the arrow. Yea, the amiable conversation of such Ministers, in itself, would terrify the consciences of men, as well as their terrible preaching; both would co-operate, one with another, to subdue the hard, and bring down the proud heart. If there had been constantly and universally observable such a behaviour as this in itinerant Preachers, it would have terrified the consciences of sinners ten times as much as all the invectives and censorious talk there has been concerning particular persons. These things have rather stupified sinners' consciences; they take them up, and make use of them as a shield, wherewith to defend themselves from the sharp arrows of the Word that are shot by these Preachers: The enemies of the present Work have been glad of these things with all their hearts. Many of the most bitter of them are probably such as in the beginning of this work had their consciences something galled and terrified with it; but these errors are the things they chiefly make use of to heal the sore that was made in their consciences.

6. Spiritual Pride takes great notice of opposition and injuries received, and is apt to be often speaking of them, and to be much in taking notice of the aggravations of them, either with an air of bitterness or contempt: Whereas humility disposes a person to be like his Lord, when reviled, dumb, not opening his mouth, but committing himself in silence to him that judgeth righteously. The humble Christian, the more clamorous and furious the world is against him, the more silent and still will he be; unless it be in his closet, and there he will not be still. Our blessed Lord seems never to have been so silent, as when the world compassed

passed him round, reproaching, buffeting and spitting on him, with loud and virulent outcries.

There has been too much talk of late, among many of the friends of religion, about opposition and persecution. It becomes the followers of the Lamb of God, when the world is in an uproar about them, and full of clamour against them, not to raise another noise to answer it, but to be still and quiet. It is not beautiful, at such a time, to have pulpits and conversation ringing with the sound of *Persecution, Persecution*, or with abundant talk about *Pharisees*, carnal persecutors, and the seed of the serpent.

Meekness and quietness among God's people, when opposed and reviled, would be the surest way to have God remarkably appear for their defence. Nothing is so effectual to bring God down from heaven in the defence of his people, as their patience under sufferings. When Christ "girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, his right hand teaching him terrible things, it is because of Truth and MEERNESS, and Righteousness," Psal. xlv. 3, 4. "God will cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth shall fear and be still, and God will arise to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth," Psal. lxxvii. And thus it is that we might expect to have Christ appear for us, if, under all the reproaches we are loaded with, we behaved ourselves with a lamb-like meekness and gentleness: But if our spirits are raised, and we are vehement and noisy with our complaints, this will be to take upon us our own defence, and God will leave it with us, to vindicate our cause as well as we can; yea, if we go on in a way of bitterness, and high censuring, it will be the way to have him rebuke us, and put us to shame before our enemies.

Here some may be ready to say, "It is not in our own cause that we are thus vehement, but in the cause of God; and the Apostle directed the primitive Christians to *contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.*" But how was it that the primitive Christians contended earnestly for the Faith? They defended the Truth with a holy conversation,



versation, but gave their reasons with meekness and fear : They contended earnestly for the faith, yea, they resisted unto blood, striving against sin ; but the blood that was shed in this earnest strife, was their own blood, and not the blood of their enemies. It was *in the cause of GOD* that Peter was so fierce, and drew his sword, and began to smite with it ; but Christ bids him put up his sword again, telling him that they that take the sword shall perish by the sword. They are the greatest conquerors in a time of persecution, who bear it with the greatest meekness and patience.

7. Another effect of spiritual Pride is a certain self-confident boldness before God and men. Thus some, in their great rejoicings before God, have not rejoiced with a reverential trembling, in a proper sense of the Majesty of God, and the awful distance between God and them. And there has also been an improper boldness before men ; which is a great error, and quite contrary to Scripture. There is a fear of reverence that is due to some men, Rom. xiii. 7. " Fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour." And there is a fear of modesty and shamefacedness in inferiors towards superiors, that is amiable, and required by Christian Rules, 1 Pet. iii. 2. " While they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." And, 1 Tim. iii. 9. " In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." And the Apostle means, that modesty, or shamefacedness, and reverence towards men, ought to have some place, even in our religious communication one with another. The same is also evident by 1 Pet. iii. 15. " Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." It is well if that very fear and shamefacedness, which the Apostle recommends, has not sometimes been condemned, under the name of a *curfed fear of man*.

It is beautiful for persons, when they are at prayer as the mouth of others, to make God only their fear and their dread, and to be wholly forgetful of men that are present, who, let them be great or small, are nothing in the presence of the great God. And it is beautiful

beautiful for a Minister, when he speaks in the Name of the Lord of Hosts, to be bold, and put off all fear of men. And it is beautiful in private Christians, though they are women and children, to be bold in professing the faith of Christ, and in the practice of all Religion, and in owning God's hand in the work of his power and grace, without any fear of men, though they should be reproached as fools and madmen, and frowned upon by great men, and cast off by parents and all the world. But for private Christians, women and others, to instruct, and exhort, with a like sort of boldness as becomes a Minister when preaching, is not beautiful.

8. Another effect of Spiritual Pride is *Assuming*: It makes it natural to persons so to act and speak, as tho' it in a special manner belonged to them to be taken notice of, and regarded. It is very natural to a person that is much under the influence of it, to take all the respect that is paid him: If others shew a disposition to yield him the deference of a preceptor, he is open to it, and freely admits it; yea, it is natural for him to expect such treatment, and to take much notice of it if he fails of it, and to have an ill opinion of others that do not pay him that which he looks upon as his prerogative. He is apt to clothe himself with a judicial and dogmatical air in conversation, and to take it upon him, and what belongs to him, to give forth his sentence, and to determine and decide. Whereas humility *vaunteth not itself*, and is apt to *prefer others in honour*. One under the influence of Spiritual Pride, naturally puts on the airs of a Master: Whereas one that is humble naturally has on the air of a Disciple; his voice is, "What shall I do? What shall I do, that I may live more to God's honour? What shall I do with this wicked heart?" He is ready to receive instruction from any body, agreeable to James i. 19. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." The humble Christian thinks he wants help from every body; whereas he that is proud thinks every body wants his help. Christian Humility intreats and beseeches; spiritual Pride affects to command, and warn with authority.

There ought to be the utmost watchfulness against all such appearances of spiritual Pride, in all that profess to have been the subjects of this work, and especially in the promoters of it, but above all in itinerant Preachers: The most eminent gifts, and highest tokens of God's favour will not excuse them. Alas! what is man at his best estate! What is the most highly favoured Christian, or the most successful Minister, that he should now think he is sufficient for something, and somebody to be regarded; and that he should go forth, and act among his fellow creatures as if he were wise, and strong, and good!

They whom God has made use of, as it were, to bring up his people out of Egypt, as he did of Moses, should take heed that they do not provoke God, as Moses did. The fruits of Moses's unbelief, which provoked God to shut him out of Canaan, were chiefly these two; *First*, His mingling bitterness with his zeal. He had a great zeal for God, and he could not bear to see the intolerable stiff-neckedness of the people, that they did not acknowledge the work of God, and were not convinced by all his wonders they had seen: But human passion was mingled with his zeal: "They angered him also at the waters of strife; so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: Because they provoked his Spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." Psal. cvi. 32, 33. *Hear now ye rebels*, says he, with bitterness of language. *Secondly*, He assumed too much to himself; *Hear now ye rebels, must we fetch water out of this rock?* His temptations indeed were very great; for he had had great discoveries of God, who had made him the instrument of great good to his Church: And they were now too strong for him: Which surely should make our young Ministers exceeding careful, and distrustful of themselves. Alas! how far are we from having the strength of holy, meek, aged Moses! And the temptation at this time is exceeding great to both those errors that Moses was guilty of: To bitterness and corrupt passion with zeal; there is so much unreasonable opposition made against this glorious work, and so much stiff-neckedness manifested in multitudes of this generation, notwithstanding all the wonderful

Works



Works of God. And there is also great temptation to an assuming behaviour: When a Minister is greatly blest from time to time, and so draws the eyes of the multitude upon him, and he sees himself flocked after, and resorted to as an oracle, and people are ready to adore him, and to offer sacrifice to him, as it was with Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, it is almost impossible for a man to avoid taking upon him the airs of a master, or some extraordinary person; a man had need to have much divine assistance, to resist the temptation. But the greater our dangers are, the more ought to be our watchfulness and prayer, and diffidence of ourselves. And we should take warning by Gideon, who after God had highly favoured him, and made him the instrument of a wonderful deliverance for his people, at length made a God of the spoils of his enemies, which became a snare to him and to his house.

There has been in some, that I believe are true friends of religion, too much appearance of pride, in their treatment of those that they looked upon to be carnal men; and particularly in refusing to enter into any discourse or reasoning with them. Indeed to spend a great deal of time in jangling about Religion, is not the way to propagate it; and some are so dreadfully set against this work, that it is a dismal task to dispute with them; all that one can say is utterly in vain, I have found it so by experience. But yet we ought to be very careful that we do not refuse to discourse with men, with any appearance of a supercilious neglect, as though we counted them not worthy to be regarded; on the contrary, we should condescend to carnal men, as Christ has condescended to us, to bear with our unteachableness and stupidity, and still to follow us with instructions, line upon line, and precept upon precept, saying, *Come, let us reason together*; setting light before us, and using all manner of arguments with us, and waiting upon such dull scholars, as it were hoping that we should receive light. We should be ready with meekness and calmness, without hot disputing, to give our reasons why we think this work is the Work of God, to carnal men when they ask us, and not turn them by as not worthy to be talked with; as the



Apostle directed the primitive Christians to be ready to give a reason of the Christian Faith and Hope to the enemies of Christianity. And we ought not to condemn all reasoning about things of Religion under the name of *carnal reason*. For my part, I desire no better than that those that oppose this work should come fairly to submit to have the cause betwixt us tried by strict reasoning.

One qualification that the Scripture speaks of once and again, as requisite in a Minister, is, that he should be *didaktikos*, apt to teach, 1 Tim. iii. 2. And the Apostle seems to explain what he means by it, in 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. or at least expresses one thing he intends by it, viz. That a Minister should be ready meekly to condescend to, and instruct opposers; "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the Truth."

*Secondly*, Another thing from whence errors in conduct, that attend such a Revival of Religion, do arise, is *wrong Principles*.

One of these is, that whatsoever is found to be of present benefit ought to be practised, without looking to future consequences. Some persons seem to think that it sufficiently justifies any thing that they say or do, that it is found to be for their present edification, and the edification of those that are with them; and therefore they think they should not concern themselves about consequences, but leave them with God. Indeed things that are in themselves our duty, being required by absolute commands of God, must be done, and future consequences left with God; our discretion takes no place here; but in other things we are to be governed by discretion, and must not only look at the present good, but our view must be extensive, and we must look at the consequences of things. It is the duty of Ministers especially to exercise this discretion: in things wherein they are not determined by an absolute rule, and that are not enjoined them by a wisdom superior to their own, Christ has left them with that

general

general rule, That they should exercise the utmost wisdom in pursuing that which, upon the best view of the consequences of things, will tend most to the advancement of his kingdom. This is implied in those words of Christ to his Disciples, when he sent them forth, "Be ye wise as serpents," Matt. x. 16. The Scriptures always represents the Work of a Gospel Minister by those employments that require a wise foresight of, and provision for, future consequences. So it is compared to the business of a Steward, a business that in an eminent manner requires forecast, and a wise laying in of provision for the supply of the needs of the family. So it is compared to the business of an husbandman, that almost wholly consists in those things that are done with a view to the future fruits and consequences of his labour. So the Work of the Ministry is compared to that of a wise Builder or Architect, who has a long reach and comprehensive view; and for whom it is necessary, that, when he begins a building, he should have at once a view of the whole frame, and all the future parts of the structure, even to the pinnacle, that all may fitly be framed together. So it is compared to the business of a Trader or Merchant, a business that exceedingly requires forecast, and, without it, is never like to be followed with any success. It is also compared to the business of a Soldier that goes to war, which is a business that perhaps, above any other, requires great foresight, and a wise provision for future events and consequences.

And particularly Ministers ought not to be careless how much they ruffle the minds of those they esteem *natural men*, or how great an uproar they raise in the *carnal world*. This certainly is not to follow the example of St. Paul, who, though he would not depart from his duty to please carnal men, yet, wherein he might with a good conscience, did exceedingly lay out himself to please them, and if possible to avoid raising in the multitude, prejudices, oppositions and tumults against the Gospel; and looked upon it, that it was of great consequence that it should be, if possible, avoided; "Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God:

Even

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Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." 1 Cor. x. 32, 33. Yea, he declares, that he made himself a kind of a servant to all sorts of men, conforming to their customs and various humours in every thing wherein he might, even in things that were very burdensome to him, that he might not fright men away from Christianity, and cause them to stand as it were armed against it; but on the contrary, if possible, might with condescension and friendship win and draw them to it. And agreeable hereto are the directions he gives to others, both ministers and people: So he directs the Christian Romans, "not to please themselves, but every one please his neighbour, for his good, to edification," Rom. xv. 1, 2. and to "follow after the things that make for peace," chap. xiv. 19. And he presses it in terms exceedingly strong, Rom. xii. 18. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And he directs Ministers to endeavour, if possible, to gain opposers by a meek condescending treatment, avoiding all appearance of strife or fierceness, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, 26. To the like purpose the same Apostle directs Christians to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without," Eph. iv. 5. and to avoid giving offence to others, if we can, "that our good may not be evil spoken of." Rom. xiv. 16. So that it is evident the most zealous and most successful propagator of vital Religion that ever was, looked upon it to be of great consequence to endeavour, as much as possible, by all the methods of lawful meekness and gentleness, to avoid raising the prejudice and opposition of the world against Religion. — When we have done our utmost, there will be opposition enough against vital Religion, against which the carnal mind of man has such an enmity, as in the Apostle's days, tho' he took so much pains to please men, yet, because he was faithful in his work, persecution almost every where was raised against him.

I know there is naturally a great enmity in the heart of man against vital Religion; and I believe there would have been a great deal of opposition against this glorious Work of God, if the subjects and promoters

of



of it had behaved themselves never so agreeably to Christian Rules; and I believe if this work goes on and spreads much in the world, so as to begin to shake kingdoms and nations, it will dreadfully stir up the rage of earth and hell, and will put the world into the greatest uproar that ever it was in since it stood; I believe Satan's dying struggles will be the most violent: But yet I believe a great deal might be done to restrain this opposition, by a good conformity to that of the Apostle James, "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom," James iii. 13.

10. Under this head of carelessness of consequences, it may be proper to say something of introducing things new and strange, and that have a tendency by their novelty to shock and surprize people. Nothing can be more evident from the New Testament, than that such things ought to be done with great caution and moderation, to avoid the offence that may be thereby given, and the prejudices that might be raised, to hinder the progress of Religion; yea, that it ought to be thus in things that are good and excellent, provided they are not of the nature of absolute duty, which though they may appear to be innovations, yet cannot be neglected without disobedience to the commands of God. What great caution did the Apostles use in introducing things that were new, and abolishing things that were old? How gradually were the ceremonial performances of the Law of Moses abolished among the Christian Jews? And how long did even the Apostle Paul himself conform to those ceremonies, which he calls weak and beggarly elements? So it seems to have been very gradually that the Jewish Sabbath was abolished, and the Christian Sabbath introduced. Thus strictly did the Apostles observe the Rule that their blessed Master gave them, of not putting new wine into old bottles, lest they should burst the bottles, and lose the wine. And how did Christ himself, while on earth, forbear so plainly to teach his Disciples the great Doctrines of Christianity, concerning his satisfaction, and the nature and manner of a sinner's justification and reconciliation with God? Because, in that infant  
state,



state; their minds were not prepared for such instructions; and therefore the more clear and full Revelation of these things was reserved for the time when they should be enlightened and strengthened by the Spirit after his ascension; "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth," John xvi. 12, 13. And Mark iv. 33. "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to bear it."—These things might be enough to convince any one, that does not think himself wiser than Christ and his Apostles, that great prudence and caution should be used in introducing things into the Church of God, that are very uncommon, though in themselves they may be very excellent, lest by our rashness and imprudent haste we hinder Religion much more than we help it.

Persons that are influenced by an indiscreet zeal are always in too much haste; they are impatient of delays, and therefore are for jumping to the uppermost step first: All their strength is employed in advancing the building in height, without taking care proportionably to enlarge the bottom: Or they are for putting on the Cupola before they come to it, or before the lower parts of the building are done; which tends at once to put a stop to the building, and hinder it ever being a compleat structure. Many that are thus imprudent and hasty with their zeal, have a real appetite for that which is good; but are like children that are impatient to wait for the fruit till the proper season of it. And oftentimes in their haste they overshoot their mark, and frustrate their own end; they put that which they would obtain further out of reach, and confirm that which they would remove. We are now just as it were beginning to recover out of a dreadful disease that we have been long under; and to feed a man recovering from a fever with strong meat at once, is the ready way to kill him. It is a vain prejudice that some have lately imbibed against such rules of prudence and moderation: but they will be forced to come to them at last; they will find themselves that they are not able to maintain their cause without them; and, if they

they will not hearken before, experience will convince them at last, when it will be too late for them to rectify their mistake.

11. Another erroneous principle, that has been an occasion of some confusion, is, that external order in matters of Religion is but little to be regarded: It is spoken highly of, under the names of ceremonies and dead forms, and is probably the more despised by some, because their opposers insist so much upon it, and because they are so continually hearing from them the cry of *disorder and confusion*.—It is objected against the importance of *external order*, that God does not look at the outward form, but at the heart. But that is a weak argument against its importance, that true Godliness does not consist in it; for it may be equally made use of against all the outward means of Grace whatsoever. True Godliness does not consist in ink and paper, but yet that would be a foolish objection against the importance of ink and paper in Religion, when without it we could not have the Word of God. If any external means at all are needful, any outward actions of a public nature, or wherein God's people are jointly concerned, without doubt external order is needful: The management of an external affair that is public, or wherein a multitude is concerned, without order, is in every thing found impossible. Without order there can be no general direction of a multitude to any particular designed end; their purposes will cross one another, and they will not help, but hinder one another. A multitude cannot act in union one with another without order; confusion separates and divides them. If a multitude would help one another in any affair, they must unite themselves one to another in a regular subordination of members, in some measure as it is in the natural body; by this means they will be in some capacity to act with united strength: And thus Christ has appointed that it should be in the visible Church, 1 Cor. xii. 14. Rom. xii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Zeal without order will do but little, or at least it will be effectual but a little while. Let a company, that are very zealous against the enemy, go forth to war without any manner of order, every one rushing forward

as his zeal shall drive him, all in confusion; if they gain something at first onset, by surprizing the enemy, yet how soon do they come to nothing? Order is one of the most necessary of all external means of the spiritual good of God's Church, and therefore it is requisite even in heaven itself, where there is the least need of any external means of grace. And the necessity of it in order to the carrying on any design wherein a multitude are concerned, is so great, that even the devils in hell are driven to something of it, that they may carry on the designs of their kingdom. And it is very observable, that those kinds of irrational creatures for whom it is needful that they should act in union, and join a multitude together, to carry on any work for their preservation, do, by a wonderful instinct, observe and maintain a most regular and exact order among themselves. And order in the visible Church is not only necessary to the Church's prosperity, but is absolutely necessary to its defence; without it, it is like a city without walls, and can be in no capacity to defend itself from any kind of mischief; And so, however it be an external thing, yet is not to be despised on that account; for though it be not the food of souls, yet it is in some respect their defence. — The people of Holland would be very foolish to despise the dikes that keep out the sea from overwhelming them, under the names of dead stones and vile earth, because the matter of which they are built is not good to eat.

12. Thus I have considered the two first of those three causes of error in conduct that were mentioned; I come now to the

*Third* and last cause of the errors of those that have appeared to be the subjects or zealous promoters of this work, viz. a being ignorant or unobservant of some particular things, by which the devil has special advantage.

And here I would particularly take notice, 1. Of some things with respect to the inward experiences of of Christians: And, 2. Something with regard to the external effects of experiences.

There



There are three things I would take notice of with regard to the experiences of Christians, by which the devil has many advantages against us.

The first thing is the *Mixture* there is in the experiences of Christians; whereby when they have truly spiritual discoveries and exercises, they have something mixed with them besides what is spiritual. The beam of light, as it comes from the fountain of light upon our hearts, is pure; but as it is reflected thence, it is mixed: The seed as sent from heaven, and planted in the heart, is pure; but, as it springs out of the heart, is impure: Yea, there is commonly a much greater mixture than persons seem to have any imagination of; I have often thought that the experiences of Christians are very frequently as it is with some sorts of fruits, that are invloped in several coverings of thick shells, which are thrown away by him that gathers the fruit, and but a very small part of the whole bulk is the pure kernel that is good to eat.

The things, of all which there is frequently some mixture, even with great and high experiences, are these three; *Human or natural Affection and Passions; Impressions on the Imagination; and a degree of Self-righteousness or spiritual Pride.* There is very often with that which is spiritual, a great mixture of that affection or passion which arises from natural principles; so that nature has a very great hand in those vehement motions and flights of the passions that appear. Hence the same degrees of divine communications shall have different effects, in persons of different natural tempers. And sometimes there is not only a mixture of that which is common and natural, but even that which is animal, which is in a great measure from the body, and is properly the result of the animal frame. So, in that love that Christians have one to another, very often there is a great mixture of what arises from common and natural principles; yea, there may be a mixture of natural love to the opposite sex. So zeal, though it be an excellent virtue, a heavenly flame, when it is pure; as it is exercised in those who are little sanctified, and little humbled, is very apt to



be mixed with human passion, yea, with corrupt, hateful affections, pride and bitterness.

15. Another thing that is often mixed with what is spiritual in the experiences of Christians, are impressions on the imagination; whereby persons, together with a spiritual understanding of divine things, and a strong sense of their excellency or great importance, have strongly impressed on their minds external ideas or images of things. A degree of imagination in such a case, as I have observed elsewhere, is unavoidable, and necessarily arises from human nature, as constituted in the present state; and a degree of imagination is really useful, and often of great benefit; but, when it is in too great a degree, it becomes an impure mixture that is prejudicial. And it greatly contributes to the other kind of mixture mentioned before, viz. of natural affections and passions.

Another thing that is often mixed with the experiences of Christians, which is the worst mixture of all, is self-righteousness or spiritual pride. This is often mixed with the joys of Christians: The joy that they have is not purely the joy of faith, or a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, but is partly a rejoicing in themselves. There is often in their elevations a looking upon themselves, and a viewing their own high attainments; they rejoice partly because they are taken with their own experiences and great discoveries; and this heightens all their passions, and especially those effects that are more external.

There is a much greater mixture of these things in the experiences of some Christians than others; in some the mixture is so great, as very much to obscure and hide the beauty of Grace in them, like a thick smoke that hinders all the shining of the fire.

These things we ought to be well aware of, that we may know what to countenance, and what to discourage; otherwise Satan will have a vast advantage against us, for he works in the corrupt mixture. Sometimes for want of persons distinguishing the ore from the pure metal, those experiences are most admired by the persons themselves that are the subjects of them, and by others, that are not the most excellent. The

great

great external effects, and vehemence of the passions, and violent agitations of the animal Spirits, are sometimes much owing to the corrupt mixture. I have observed a great difference among those that are disposed to be earnestly talking to those that are about them: Some insist most on what they behold in God and Christ, the glory of the divine perfections, Christ's wonderful condescension and grace, their own unworthiness, and the infinite obligations they themselves and others are under to love and serve God; others almost wholly on their own high privileges, their assurance of God's love and favour, and the weakness and wickedness of opposers, and how much they are above their reach. The latter may have much of the presence of God, but their experiences are not so solid and unmixed as the former. And there is a great deal of difference in person's earnestness in their talk and behaviour: In some it seems to come indeed from the fulness of their hearts, and from the great sense they have of the certainty and infinite greatness of eternal things attended with all appearances of great humility; but in others, their earnestness seems to arise from a great mixture of human passion, and an intemperate agitation of the spirits, which appears by their earnestness and vehemence not being proportioned to the nature of the subject they insist on, but they are violent in every thing they say, as much when they are talking of things of smaller importance, as when speaking of things of greater weight. And there have been some few instances of a more extraordinary nature still, even of persons finding themselves constrained to cry out, from an unaccountable kind of bodily pressure, without any extraordinary view of any thing in their minds, or sense of any thing upon their hearts; wherein probably there was the immediate hand of the devil.

16. Another thing by which the devil has great advantage, is the unheeded *Defects* there sometimes are in the experiences of true Christians, and those high affections, wherein there is much that is truly good.

What I now have respect to is something diverse from that defect or imperfection of degree which is in

every holy disposition and exercise; what I aim at is, Experiences being defective in some particular thing that ought to be in them; which though it be not such a defect as renders them utterly vain, and altogether abominable to God, yet is such a defect as maims and deforms the experience: The essence of truly Christian Experiences is not wanting, but yet that is wanting that is very needful in order to the proper beauty of the image of Christ in such a person's experiences; things are very much out of due proportion: There is indeed much of some things, but at the same time there is so little of some other things that should be, that the defect very much deforms the Christian.

When this deficiency and disproportion is great, it is not only a great deformity in itself, but has many ill consequences; it gives the devil great advantage, and leaves a door open for corruption, and exposes to very unlovely actions, and issues oftentimes in the great wounding of the soul.

For the better understanding of this matter, we may observe, that God, in the Revelation that he has made of himself by Jesus Christ, has taken care to give a proportionable manifestation of two kinds of excellencies or perfections of his nature, viz. those that tend to possess us with awe and reverence; and those that tend to draw and encourage us: By *the one*, he appears as an infinitely great, holy, and heart-searching Judge; by *the other*, as a gentle and gracious father and a loving friend: By the one, he is a pure, searching and burning flame; by the other, a sweet, resting light. These two kinds of attributes are admirably tempered together in the revelation of the Gospel: There is a proportionable manifestation of justice and mercy, holiness and grace, authority and condescension. God hath thus ordered, that his diverse excellencies, as he reveals himself in the face of Jesus Christ, should have a proportionable manifestation: He knew it to be of great consequence, that our apprehensions of these diverse perfections of his nature should be duly proportioned one to another: A defect on the one hand, viz. having much of a discovery of his love and grace, without a proportionable discovery



discovery of his awful majesty, and his holy and searching purity, would tend to spiritual pride, carnal confidence and presumption; and a defect on the other hand, viz. having much of a discovery of his holy Majesty, without a proportionable discovery of his grace, tends to unbelief, a sinful fearfulness and spirit of bondage. And herein chiefly consists that deficiency of experiences that I am now speaking of: The Revelation God has made of himself in his word, is perfect; but the light and communications we have, are not perfect, but many ways exceeding imperfect and maimed. There is a great difference among Christians in this respect; some have much more general discoveries than others, who are upon many accounts the most amiable Christians. Christians may have experiences that are very high, and yet there may be very much of this deficiency and disproportion: Their high experiences are truly from the Spirit of God, but sin comes in by the defect (as indeed all sin is originally from a defective, privative cause) and in such a case high discoveries, at the same time that they are enjoyed, may be, and sometimes are, the occasion of sin: And many times the Spirit of God is quenched by this means, and God punishes the pride and presumption that rises, by permitting such darkness, and suffering such horrid temptations, as are enough to make one's hair stand an end to hear them. Christians therefore should diligently observe their own hearts, and should pray to God that he would give them experiences, in which one thing may bear a proportion to another, that God may be honoured, and their souls edified thereby; and Ministers should have an eye to this, in their private dealings with the souls of their people.

It is chiefly from such a defect of experiences that some things have arisen that have been pretty common of late; as talking of divine things, and expressing divine joys with laughing or a light behaviour. The proper cause of this has been, that odious defect in their experience, whereby there has been wanting a sense of the awful Majesty of God as present with them, and their vileness before him, proportionable to



the sense they have had of God's grace and the love of Christ. And the same is true in many cases of person's unsuitable boldness, their disposition to speak with intemperate zeal, and many other things that sometimes appear in Christians under great religious affections.

And sometimes the vehement motion of the animal Spirits, is owing to experiences being thus partial. I have known in several instances, that persons have been greatly affected with the dying love of Christ, and the happiness of the enjoyment of him in heaven, and their animal Spirits have been in great emotion; but in the midst of it a deep sense of the awful Majesty of God, has at once composed them, and quieted animal nature, without diminishing their comfort, but only has made it of a better and more solid nature; when they have had a sense both of the Majesty and Grace of God, one thing has as it were balanced another, and caused a more happy sedateness and composure of body and mind.

From these things we may learn how to judge of experiences, and to estimate their goodness. Those are not always the best experiences that are attended with the most vehement motions of the animal Spirits, or that have the greatest effects on the body; nor are they always the best that do most dispose persons to abound in talk, and to speak in the most vehement manner (though these things often arise from the greatness of spiritual experiences :) But those are the most excellent experiences that are qualified as follows; 1. That have the least mixture, or are the most purely spiritual. 2. That are the least deficient and partial, in which the diverse things that appertain to christian experience are proportionable one to another. And, 3. That are raised to the highest degree: it is no matter how high they are raised, if they are qualified as before mentioned. Experiences, thus qualified, will be attended with the most amiable behaviour, will bring forth the most solid and sweet fruits, and will be the most durable, and have the greatest effect on the abiding temper of the soul.

If God is pleased to carry on this work, and it should prove to be the dawning of a general Revival  
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of the Christian Church, the time will come when the experiences of Christians shall be much more generally thus qualified. Their discoveries will be in a much higher degree; but yet so ordered, of an infinitely wise God, that they shall not have so great an effect, in proportion, on the body, and will be less oppressive to nature; and that the outward manifestations will rather be like those that were in Stephen, when he was full of the Holy Ghost, when *all that sat in the Council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.* Their inward fulness of the Spirit of God, in his divine, amiable and sweet influences, shall as it were shine forth in an heavenly aspect, and manner of speech and behaviour. But,

17. There is another thing concerning the experiences of Christians, of which it is of yet greater importance we should be aware, than either of the preceding, and that is the *degenerating of experiences.* What I mean is something diverse from the mere decay of experiences, or their gradually vanishing, by person's losing their sense of things: It is person's experiences growing by degrees worse and worse in their kind, more and more partial and deficient; in which things are more out of due proportion, and also have more and more of a corrupt mixture; the spiritual part decreases, and the other useless and hurtful parts greatly increase. There is such a thing, and it is very frequent: I have seen it in very many instances; and great are the mischiefs that have risen through want of being more aware of it.

There is commonly, as I observed before, in high experiences, besides that which is spiritual, a mixture of three things, viz. natural affections, workings of imagination, and self-righteousness or spiritual pride. Now it often comes to pass, that through person's not distinguishing the wheat from the chaff, and for want of watchfulness and humble jealousy of themselves, and laying great weight on the natural and imaginary part, that part grows, and the spiritual part decreases; the devil sets in, and works in the corrupt part, and cherishes it to his utmost; till at length the experiences  
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of those who began well, come to little else but violent motions of carnal affections, great heat of imagination, a great degree of enthusiasm, and swelling of spiritual pride: Like some fruits which bud, blossom and kernel well, but afterwards are blasted with an excess of moisture; so that though the bulk is monstrously great, yet there is little but what is useless and unwholesome. It is probable, that many of the Heresies that have arisen, and Sects that have appeared in the christian world, with wild enthusiastical notions and practices, began at first by this means, that it was such a degenerating of experiences that first gave rise to them.

There is nothing in the world that does so much expose to this degenerating of experiences, as an unheeded spiritual pride, persons being conceited of their own stock, without an humble, daily, and continual dependence on God. This above all things promotes this degeneracy of experiences, because it grieves and quenches the Spirit of the Lamb of God, kills the spiritual, and cherishes the natural part, inflames the carnal affections, and heats the imagination.

The unhappy person that is the subject of such a degeneracy, for the most part, is not sensible of his own calamity; but because he finds himself still violently moved, thinks himself fuller of the Spirit of God than ever. But indeed it is with him, as the Apostle says of the Galatians, "Having begun in the Spirit, they are made perfect by the flesh," Gal. iii. 3.

By the mixture there is of common affection with Love to God, the Love of true Christians is liable to degenerate, and to be more and more built on the supposition of being his high and peculiar favourites. So the joy of Christians, by reason of the mixture there is with spiritual joy, is liable to degenerate, and to come to that at last, as to be but little else but joy in a person's own supposed eminency. So zeal, that at first might be in great part spiritual, yet through the mixture there is, in a long continuance of opposition and controversy, may degenerate more and more into human passion, and may come to bitterness, and even to a degree of hatred. And so love to brethren may by degrees



degrees come to little else but fondness for a party; yea, through a mixture of a natural love to the opposite sex, may degenerate more and more. Certainly the mutual embraces and kisses of persons of different sexes, under the notion of Christian Love, are utterly to be disallowed, as having the most direct tendency to turn Christian Love into brutish Lust. I should also think it adviseable, that meetings of young people, of both sexes, in the evening, by themselves, without a minister, or any elder people amongst them, for religious exercises, should be avoided: For though for the present, while their minds are greatly solemnized with lively impressions, and a deep sense of divine things, there may appear no ill consequences; yet we must look to the farther end of things, and guard against future dangers.

The *Defect* there sometimes is in the experiences of Christians, exposes them to degenerate, as well as the mixture that they have. Maimed experiences sometimes become more and more so: The mind being wholly intent upon those things that are in view, and those that are most wanting being neglected, there is less and less of them, and so the gap for corruption to come in grows wider and wider. And commonly both these causes of the degenerating of experiences operate together.

We had need to be *jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy*, as the Apostle was over the Christian Corinthians, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

18. Thus I have taken notice of some things with regard to the inward experiences of Christians, by which Satan has an advantage. I now proceed in the

II. Place, to take notice of something with regard to the external effects of experiences, which also gives Satan an advantage.

Though it would be unreasonable, and prejudicial to the interest of Religion, to frown upon all these extraordinary external effects and manifestations of great religious affections (for a measure of them is natural, necessary and beautiful, and the effect in no wise disproportioned



proportioned to the spiritual cause, and is of great benefit to religion) yet I think they err who think that these things should be wholly unlimited, and that all should be encouraged in going to the utmost length that they feel themselves inclined to: There ought to be a gentle restraint held upon these things, and there should be a prudent care taken of persons in such circumstances, and they should be moderately advised at proper seasons, not to make more ado than there is need of, but rather to hold a restraint upon their inclinations; otherwise extraordinary outward effects will grow upon them, they will be more and more natural and unavoidable, and the outward show will increase, without any increase of the internal cause; persons will find themselves under a kind of necessity of making a great ado, with less and less affection of soul, till at length almost any slight emotion will set them going; and they will be more and more violent and boisterous, and will grow louder and louder, till their actions and behaviour become indeed very absurd. These things experience proves.

19. Thus I have taken notice of the more general causes whence the errors that have attended this great Revival of Religion have risen, and under each head have observed some particular errors that have flowed from these fountains. I now proceed, as I proposed, in the

*Second Place*, to take notice of some particular errors that have risen from several of these causes; in some perhaps they have been chiefly owing to one, in others to another, and in others to several, or all conjoint. And here the

*First Thing* I would take notice of is, censuring others. It is the worst disease that has attended this work. The manner of many has been, when they first enter into conversation with any person, to discern him, or to fix a judgment of him, from his manner of talking of things of Religion, whether he be experimentally acquainted with vital piety or not. So, when they have heard any Minister pray or preach, their first work has been to observe, whether he prays like one that feels the saving power of God's Spirit in his

heart,

heart, and whether he preaches like one that knows what he says. It has been so much the way in some places, that many new converts do not know but it is their duty to do so. When once persons yield to such a notion, they will quickly grow very discerning in their own apprehension: And, when they have passed their censure, every thing seems to confirm it; they see more and more in the person they have censured, that seems to them to shew plainly that he is an unconverted man. And, if the person censured be a minister, every thing in his public performances seems dead; yea, it seems worse and worse to them, his preaching grows more and more intolerable. When the Spirit of God was wonderfully poured out in this place more than seven years ago, and all the town seemed to be alive and full of God, there was no such notion or humour prevailing: When Ministers preached here, as very many did at that time, young and old, our people did not go about to discern whether they were men of experience or not, nor did any such thing enter into their hearts; but the business of every one was to listen to what was said, and apply it to his own heart. And scarcely ever did any Minister preach here, but his preaching did some remarkable service.

20. One thing that has been supposed to be sufficient warrant for openly censuring Ministers, is their opposing this work of God that has been lately carried on in the land. And there can be no doubt but that opposition may be such, as to render either ministers or people truly scandalous; and that ministers hereby may utterly defeat the design of their ministry. Nor should I think that any person had power to oblige me to attend the ministry of one who did from time to time plainly preach against this work, or speak reproachfully of it in his public performances, after all Christian methods had been used for a remedy, and to no purpose.

But as to determining how far opposing this work is consistent with a state of grace, or how far, and for how long time, some persons of experience may oppose it, through prejudices they have received from the errors that have been mixed with this work, or through

through some peculiar disadvantages they are under, this is a difficult thing : I have seen that which abundantly convinces me that the business is too high for me ; I am glad that God has not committed it to me ; I can joyfully leave it in his hands. We may represent it as exceeding dangerous to oppose this work, for this we have good warrant in the Word of God ; but I know of no necessity we are under to determine whether it be possible for those that are guilty of it to be in a state of grace or no. Blessed be his name, that he has not laid such a temptation in the way of my pride ! I know that, in order to be fit for this business, I must not only be vastly more knowing, but more humble than I am.

This bitter root of censoriousness must be totally rooted out, if we would prepare the way of the Lord. It has nourished many other things contrary to the humility, meekness and love of the Gospel. The minds of many have received an unhappy turn, in some respects, with their Religion : There is a certain point or sharpness, a disposition to a kind of warmth, that does not favour of that meek, lamb-like, sweet disposition, that becomes Christians : Many have now been so long habituated to it, that they do not know how to get out of it ; but we must get out of it ; the point and sharpness must be blunted, and we must learn another way of manifesting our zeal for God.

21. One thing more I would take notice of, before I conclude this part. I believe it to have been one fruit of the joyful influences of the Spirit of God that have been lately given, that there has appeared such a disposition to sing praise to God ; not only in solemn meetings, but when Christians occasionally meet together at each other's houses. But the mismanagement I have respect to, is the getting into a way of performing it without that reverence and solemnity with which all open acts of divine worship ought to be attended. It may be two or three in a room are singing hymns of praise to God, others talking at the same time, others about their work, with little more appearance of regard to what is doing, than if some were only singing a common song. There is danger, if such things



things are continued, of its coming to that by degrees, that a mere nothing be made of this duty, to the great violation of the third commandment. Let Christians abound as much as they will in this holy, heavenly exercise, in God's house, and in their own houses; but when it is performed, let it be performed as an holy act, wherein they have immediately and visibly to do with God.

What a poor, blind, weak and miserable creature is man, at his best estate! We are like helpless sheep; the devil is too subtle for us: What is our strength! What is our wisdom! How ready are we to go astray! How easily are we drawn aside into innumerable snares, while we in the mean time are bold and confident, and doubt not but we are right and safe! We are foolish sheep, in the midst of subtle serpents and cruel wolves, and do not know it. O how unfit are we to be left to ourselves! And how much do we stand in need of the wisdom, the power, the condescension, patience, forgiveness and gentleness of our good Shepherd!

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## P A R T V.

*Shewing positively what ought to be done to promote this Work.*

1. **I**N considering the means of promoting this work of God, I have already observed some instances wherein there has been needless objecting and complaining; and have also taken notice of many things that ought to be amended. I now proceed, in the

*Third* and last place, to shew positively what ought to be done to promote this work. The obligations that all are under, with one consent, to do their utmost, were observed before. I hope that some, upon reading what was said under that head, will be ready to say, What shall we do? To such I would now offer my thoughts, in answer to such an enquiry.

And that which I think we ought to set ourselves about, in the first place, is to remove stumbling-blocks. When God is revealed as about to come, gloriously to



set up his kingdom in the world, this is proclaimed, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an high-way for our God," Isa. xl. 3. And again, Isa. lvii. 14. "Cast ye up, cast ye up; prepare the way; take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people." And, chap. lxii. 10. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high-way; gather out the stones."

And, in order to this, there must be a confessing of faults on both sides: For undoubtedly many are the faults that have been committed. There is hardly any duty more mortifying to the pride of man; but it must be done. Repentance is, in a peculiar manner, a proper duty, when the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And if God does now loudly call upon us to repent, then he also calls to make proper manifestations of our repentance. I am persuaded that those who have openly opposed this work, or have from time to time spoken lightly of it, cannot be excused in the sight of God, without openly confessing their fault therein; especially if they be Ministers. If they have, either directly or indirectly, opposed this work, or in public or private prejudiced their people against it; if hereafter they shall be convinced it is of God, they ought by no means to palliate the matter, and excuse themselves, and pretend that they always thought so, and that it was only such and such imprudences they objected against: But they ought openly to declare their conviction, and condemn themselves for what they have done; for it is Christ that they have spoken against, in speaking lightly of, and prejudicing others against this work; yea, worse than that, it is the Holy Ghost. And though they have done it ignorantly, and in unbelief, yet, when they find out who it is that they have opposed, undoubtedly God will hold them bound publickly to confess it.

On the other side, if those that have been zealous to promote this work have in any of the forementioned instances gone out of the way, and done that which is contrary to Christian Rules, whereby they have openly injured others, and so wounded Religion, they must

must publickly confess it, as they would gather out the stones, and prepare the way of God's people. They who have laid great stumbling-blocks in others way by their *open transgression*, are bound to remove them by their *open repentance*.

Some, probably, will object, that the opposers will take advantage by this to insult both them and Religion. And indeed, to the shame of some, they have taken advantage by such things. But if there are some imbittered enemies of Religion, that stand ready to improve every thing to its disadvantage, yet that ought not to hinder an enjoined Christian duty; open repentance, after a fault openly committed. To stand it out, to avoid such an inconvenience, is to do evil to prevent evil. And besides, the danger of an evil consequence is much greater on the other side: To commit sin, and then stand in it, is what will give the enemy the greatest advantage. For Christians to act like Christians, in openly humbling themselves when they have openly offended, in the end brings the greatest honour to Christ and Religion; and in this way are persons most likely to have God appear for them.

2. Again, at such a time as this, God does especially call us to meekness and mutual forbearance: *Let your moderation be known unto all men: The Lord is at hand.* For us to be judging one another, and behaving with fierceness and bitterness, when he who is the searcher of all hearts, to whom we must all give an account, appears so remarkably present, is exceeding unsuitable. Our business at such a time should be at home, searching ourselves, and taking heed to our own behaviour. If there be glorious prosperity to the Church of God approaching, those that are the most meek will have the largest share in it: For, when God remarkably *arises to execute judgment*, it is to *save all the meek of the earth*.

Those therefore that have been zealous for this work, and have erred with their zeal, ought not to be treated with bitterness. There is abundant reason to think, that most of them are children of God: And as to those things wherein we see them to be in an error, we

have reason to say as the Apostle, "If any are otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto them." Phil. iii. 15. Their errors should not be made use of by us to excite indignation towards them, but should influence all of us that hope we are children of God, to humble ourselves, and become more entirely dependent on the Lord Jesus. And those Ministers that have been judged, and injuriously dealt with, will do the part of Christ's disciples, not to judge and revile again, but to receive such injuries with meekness and forbearance, and make an improvement of them, more strictly examining their hearts and ways, and committing themselves to God. We have not yet seen the end of things; nor do we know who will be most honoured of God in the issue. "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit," Eccl. vii. 8.

Contrary to this is each party's stigmatizing the other with odious names, which tends greatly to widen and perpetuate the breach. Such distinguishing names of reproach do as it were divide us into two armies, drawn up in battle array, ready to fight one with another; which greatly hinders the work of God.

3. And as such a time does especially require the exercise of forbearance *one towards another*; so does it the exercise of great patience, in waiting *on GOD*, under any special difficulties and disadvantages they may be under. The beginning of a Revival of Religion will necessarily be attended with many difficulties of this nature; many parts of the reviving Church will, for a while, be under great disadvantages, by what remains of the old disease. We cannot expect that, after a long time of degeneracy and depravity, things should all come right at once: And to be overhasty and violent, in such a case, being resolved to have every thing rectified, or else to separate, is the way to hinder things coming right at all, and to break all in pieces. Not but the case may be such as to allow of no delay, without violation of the absolute commands of God: but otherwise, though the difficulty may be very great, another course should be taken. We should have recourse directly to the Throne of  
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Grace, to represent our difficulties before the great Shepherd of the sheep; and when we have done, should wait patiently upon him who in his time will appear for our deliverance: But if, instead of that, we are impatient, and take the work into our own hands, we dishonour God, and have reason to fear that he will leave us to manage our affairs for ourselves.

4. What has been mentioned hitherto, has relation to the behaviour we are obliged to, as we would prevent the hindrances of the work; but, besides these, there are things that must be done, more directly to advance it. And here it concerns every one to look into his own heart, and see that the work be promoted in his own soul.

And though I judge not those that have opposed it, yet I would entreat them to leave off concerning themselves so much about others, and look into their own souls, and see to it that they experience a true, saving work of the Spirit of God. If they do not, how can they have any heart to be busily and fiercely engaged about the mistakes of others? I would beseech them seriously to weigh the matter with respect to this work, and consider whether, if the Scriptures are the word of God, the work that has been described in the first part of this treatise must needs be, as to the substance of it, the work of God, and the flourishing of that Religion that is taught by Christ and his Apostles; and whether any good medium can be found, between owning this work, and being a Deist. I would now humbly invite them to come and join with us, and be on our side; and, if I had the authority of Moses, I would say to them as he did to Hobab, Numb. x. 29. "We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good: For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

As the benefit of improving such a season is extraordinary great, so is the danger of neglecting or misemploying it. For as such a time is a time of great favour to those that are partakers of the blessing, so it is always a time of remarkable vengeance to others. So in Isa. lxi. 2. the same that is called "the acceptable



year of the Lord," is called also, "the day of vengeance of our GOD." So it is foretold, that at the beginning of the glorious times of the Christian Church, as "the hand of the Lord is known towards his servants, so shall his indignation towards his enemies," Isa. lxvi. 14. There is no time like such a time for the increase of guilt, and desperate hardening of the heart; which is the most awful fruit of divine wrath that can be inflicted on any mortal. So that a time of great grace and pouring out of the Spirit, and the fruits of divine mercy, is ever also a time of pouring out of divine vengeance, on those that neglect and misemploy such a season.

5. The present Revival of Religion has an awful aspect upon those that are advanced in years. It has been chiefly amongst those that are young. And indeed commonly, when GOD has begun any great work, he has taken the young people, and has cast off the old and stiff-necked generation. There was a remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of GOD on the children of Israel in the wilderness, on their younger generation, *their little ones, that they said should be a prey*, the generation that entered into Canaan with Joshua. That generation seems to have been the most excellent generation that ever was in the Church of Israel. There is no generation, of which there is so much good, and so little evil spoken in Scripture. In that generation, that were under twenty years when they went out of Egypt, was that *kindness of youth, and love of espousals*, spoken of, Jer. ii. 2, 3. But the old generation were passed by, and remained obstinate and stiff-necked, and unconvinced by all GOD's wondrous works that they beheld. Let the old generation in this land take warning from hence, and take heed that they do not continue for ever objecting, murmuring and cavilling against the work of GOD, lest, while GOD is bringing their children into a land flowing with milk and honey, he should swear in his wrath concerning them, that their carcases shall fall in the wilderness.

So when GOD had a design of great mercy to the Jews, in bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, there was a blessed pouring out of the Spirit upon

upon them in Babylon, and a Spirit of prayer, to cry earnestly to God for mercy: But it was not upon the old generation that were carried captive. The Captivity continued just long enough for them to waite away and die in their captivity. The old generation, and heads of families would not hearken to the repeated warnings of the Prophet; but he had greater success among the young people; as appears by Jer. vi. 10, 11. "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together: For even the husband with the wife (i. e. the heads of families, and parents of these children) shall be taken, the aged, with him that is full of days." Yet, blessed be God! there are some of the elder people that have been made partakers of this work: And those that are most awakened by these warnings of God's word, will be most likely to be made partakers hereafter.

6. But above all others, does it concern us that are Ministers to see that we are partakers of this work, that we have experience of the saving operations of the same Spirit which is now poured out on the land. How melancholy is the case, when it is otherwise! For one to stand at the head of a congregation, as representing Christ and speaking in his stead; and to act the part of a shepherd and guide to a people, when many are under great awakenings, and many filled with divine light, love and joy; to undertake to instruct and lead them all, under these various circumstances; to be put to it, continually to play the hypocrite, and force the airs of a saint in preaching; and from time to time in private conversation, and particular dealing with souls, to undertake to judge of their circumstances; to talk with those that come to him, as if he knew what they said; to try to talk with persons of experience, as if he had experience as well as they; to force a joyful countenance and manner of speech, when

when there is nothing in the heart : What sorrowful work is here ! O how miserably must such a person feel ! What a wretched slavery is this ! What pains must such a Minister use to conceal himself ! And how weak are his hands ! Besides the infinite provocation of the most high God, and displeasure of his Lord and Master. There is reason from the Scripture to conclude, that no sort of men will be so low in hell as ungodly ministers ; for every thing spoken of in Scripture, as that which aggravates guilt, and heightens divine wrath, meets in them.

And what great disadvantages are unholy Ministers under, to oppose any irregularities, or imprudences, or intemperate zeal, when they are conscious to themselves that they have no true zeal at all ? If Enthusiasm and wildness comes in like a flood, what poor instruments are such Ministers to withstand it ? With what courage can they open their mouths, when they look inward, and consider how it is with them ?

We that are Ministers not only have need to experience the saving influence of the Spirit of God upon our heart, but we need a double portion of the Spirit of God at such a time as this : We had need to be as full of light as a glass is, that is held out in the sun ; and, with respect to love and zeal, to be like the angels, that are a flame of fire. The times extremely require a fulness of the divine Spirit in Ministers, and we ought to give ourselves no rest till we have obtained it. And, in order to this, I should think Ministers, above all persons, ought to be much in secret prayer and fasting, and also much in praying and fasting one with another. It seems to me, it would be becoming our circumstances, if Ministers in a neighbourhood would often meet together, and spend days in fasting and fervent prayer among themselves, earnestly seeking for extraordinary supplies of divine grace ; and also if, on their occasional visits one to another, instead of spending their time in sitting and smoking, and in diverting, or worldly, unprofitable conversation, telling news, and making their remarks on this and the other trifling subject, they would spend their time in praying together, and religious conference. How much do  
many

many of the common people shame many of us that are in the work of the Ministry, in these respects? Surely we do not behave ourselves like Christian Ministers, like Ambassadors of Christ! And, while we condemn zealous persons for censuring Ministers, it ought not to be without deep reflections upon ourselves; for indeed we do very much to provoke censoriousness, and lay a great temptation before others. And if we can prove that they transgress the Scripture-rule, yet our indignation should be chiefly against ourselves.

7. Two things that are exceeding needful in Ministers who would advance the kingdom of Christ, are *Zeal* and *Resolution*. The power of these is greater than can well be imagined: A man of but an ordinary capacity will do more with them, than one of ten times the parts and learning without them. More may be done with them in a few days, or at least weeks, than can be done without them in many years. The very sight or appearance of a thoroughly engaged spirit, together with a fearless courage and unyielding resolution, in any person that has undertaken the managing any affair amongst mankind, goes a great way towards accomplishing the effect. But while we are cold and heartless, and only go on in an old formal round, we shall never do any great matters. Our misery is want of zeal and courage. Hence often, when any thing very considerable that is new is proposed to be done for the advancement of Religion, many difficulties are found out, many objections started, and it is put off from one to another; but no body does any thing. And after this manner good deligins have often failed, and sunk as soon as proposed.

Zeal and Courage will do much in persons of but ordinary capacity; but especially if joined with great abilities. If some great men that have appeared in our nation had engaged in the Christian cause with zeal and fervour, with the blessing of God, they would have turned the world upside down. We have many Ministers in the land that do not want abilities; they are persons of parts and learning; they should consider how much they might do for Christ, and how glorious a reward



reward they might receive, if they had in their hearts an heavenly warmth and heat, proportionable to their light.

8. And though it may be thought that I go out of my proper sphere, to intermeddle in the affairs of the Colleges; yet I will take the liberty of an *Englishman* (that speaks his mind freely concerning public affairs) and the liberty of a Minister of Christ (who doubtless may speak his mind as freely about things that concern the kingdom of his Lord) to give my opinion, in some things, with respect to those Societies; the main design of which is to train up persons, and fit them for the work of the Ministry. And I would say in general, care should be taken that those Societies should be so regulated, as to be in fact nurseries of piety. Otherwise they are fundamentally ruined and undone as to their main design and most essential end. They ought to be so constituted, that vice and idleness should have no living there: These are not to be suffered in Societies whose main design is, to train up youth in Christian knowledge and eminent piety, to fit them to be pastors of the flock of the blessed Jesus. I have had some acquaintance with the affairs of a College; and I cannot but think that it is practicable so to constitute such Societies, that there should be no being there, without being virtuous, serious and diligent. It seems to me to be a reproach to the land, that ever it should be so with our Colleges, that, instead of being places of the greatest advantages for true piety, one cannot send a child thither without great danger of his being infected as to his morals. It is perfectly intolerable; and any thing should be done, rather than it should be so. If we pretend to have any Colleges at all, under a notion of training up youth for the Ministry, there should be some way found out that should certainly prevent its being thus. To have Societies for bringing persons up to be Ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and to have them places of so much infection, is the greatest nonsense and absurdity imaginable.

And as thorough and effectual care should be taken, that vice and idleness be not tolerated in these Societies; so certainly the design of them requires that  
extraordinary

extraordinary means should be used in them for training up the students in vital Religion, and experimental and practical godliness; so that they should be holy Societies, and the very place be as it were sacred: They should be, in the midst of the land, fountains of piety and holiness. There is a great deal of pains taken to teach the scholars human learning; there ought to be as much and more care thoroughly to educate them in Religion, and lead them to true and eminent holiness. If the main design of these nurseries is to bring up persons to teach Christ, then it is of the greatest importance that care be taken to bring those who are there educated to the knowledge of Christ. It has been common in our public prayers to call these Societies *the Schools of the Prophets*; and, if they are Schools to train up young men to be *Prophets*, certainly there ought to be extraordinary care there taken to train them up to be *Christians*.

And I cannot see why it is not on all accounts fit and convenient for the Governors and Instructors of the Colleges, particularly, singly and frequently, to converse with the Students about the state of their souls.

9. There are some that are not Ministers, who have great advantages for promoting such a glorious work as this; particularly great men, or men that are high in honour and influence. How much might such do to encourage Religion, and open the way for it to have free course! But there is commonly a shyness in great men with respect to Religion, as though they were ashamed of it, or at least ashamed to do very much in it; whereby they greatly provoke the King of Kings, and wound Religion among the common people. They are careful of their honour, and seem to be afraid of appearing forward and zealous in Religion, as though it were what would debase their character, and expose them to contempt. But, in this day of bringing up the ark, they ought to be like David, that great king of Israel, who *made himself vile* before the ark; and as he was the highest in dignity among God's people, so he appeared foremost in the zeal he manifested on that occasion: thereby animating and encouraging the whole congregation

congregation to praise the Lord, and rejoice before him with all their might.

Rich men have a talent in their hands, by which they might much promote this work. If they could be persuaded to lay out some considerable part of that which God has given them for the honour of God, instead of spending it for their own honour, or laying it up for their posterity, they would not repent of it afterwards.

Great things might be done for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, at this day, by those that have ability, by establishing funds for the support and propagation of Religion; by supporting some that are eminently qualified, in preaching the Gospel in certain parts of the country, that are more destitute of the means of grace; by searching out children of promising abilities, and their hearts full of love to Christ, but of poor families (as doubtless there are such) and bringing them up for the Ministry; and by distributing books that are remarkably fitted to promote vital Religion; by establishing and supporting schools in poor towns and villages; which might be done on such a foundation, as not only to bring up children in common learning, but also train them up in vital piety: And doubtless something might be done in this way, that might have a great tendency to the flourishing of Religion in the rising generation.

10. But I would now proceed to mention some things which ought to be done, that concern all in general.

The first thing I shall mention is *Fasting and Prayer*. It seems to me that the circumstances of the present work loudly call God's people to abound in this; whether they consider the experience God has lately given them of the worth of his presence, and of the blessed fruits of the effusions of his Spirit, to excite them to pray for the continuance and increase, and greater extent of such blessings; or whether they consider the great manifestations he has lately made of the freeness and riches of his grace; and how much there is, in what we have seen of the glorious works of God, to put us in mind of the yet greater things that he has spoken

spoken of in his word, and to excite our longings for those things, and hopes of their approach; or whether we consider the opposition Satan makes against this work, and the many difficulties with which it is clogged, and the distressing circumstances that some parts of God's Church are now under in this land.

So is God's will, that the prayers of his saints should be one great means of carrying on the designs of Christ's kingdom in the world. When God has something very great to accomplish for his Church, it is his will that there should precede the extraordinary prayers of his people; as is manifest by Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "I will yet, for this, be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." And, when God is about to accomplish great things for his Church, he will begin by remarkably pouring out the spirit of grace and supplication, Zech. xii. 10. If we are not to expect that the Devil should go out of a particular person, without extraordinary prayer, or *Prayer and Fasting*; how much less should we expect to have him cast out of the land, and the world, without it?

I am sensible much has been done in duties of this nature, but not so much as God in his Providence calls for. I should think the people of God in this land, at such a time as this is, would be in the way of their duty, to do three times as much at Fasting and Prayer as they do; not only for the pouring out of the Spirit on those towns or places whereto they belong, but that God would appear for his Church, carry on his work in the land, and in the world, and fulfil the things he has spoken of in his word, that his Church has been so long wishing and waiting for. "They that make mention of the Lord ought not to keep silence, and should give God no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Isa. lxii. 6, 7. Before the first great pouring out of the Spirit of God on the Christian Church, the Church of God gave themselves to incessant prayer, Acts i. 13, 14. There is a time wherein God will wonderfully appear for the deliverance of his church from all her enemies, when he will *avenge his own elect*: And Christ reveals that this will be in answer to their incessant prayers, or

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*crying day and night*, Luke xviii. 7. In Israel, the *day of atonement*, which was their great day of fasting and prayer, preceded and made way for the glorious and joyful *feast of tabernacles*. When Christ is mystically born into the world, to rule over all nations, it will be in consequence of the Church's *crying, and travailing in birth, and being pained to be delivered*. One thing here intended doubtless is, her crying and agonizing in prayer.

11. GOD seems now, at this very time, to be waiting for this from us. When GOD is about to bestow some great blessing on his Church, it is often his manner so to order things in his providence, as to shew his Church their great need of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to him for it. And let us consider GOD's present dispensations towards his Church in this land: A glorious work of his grace has been begun; and GOD has, of late, suffered innumerable difficulties to arise, that do in a great measure clog and hinder it, and bring many of GOD's children into great distress. And yet he does not wholly forsake the work of his hand; there are remarkable tokens of his presence still to be seen; as though he was not forward to forsake us, and (if I may so say) as though he had a mind to carry on his work; but only was waiting for something that he expected in us, as requisite in order to it. And we have great reason to think, one thing at least is, that we should further acknowledge the greatness and necessity of such a mercy, and our dependence on GOD for it, in earnest and importunate prayers to him.

There is no way that Christians in a private capacity can do so much to promote the work of GOD, and advance the kingdom of Christ, as by prayer. By this even women, children and servants, may have a public influence. Let persons be never so weak, and never so mean, and under never so poor advantages, to do much for Christ and the souls of men, otherwise; yet, if they have the spirit of grace and supplication, they have power with him that has the government of the whole world: And so a poor man in his cottage may have a blessed influence all over the world. GOD is (if I may so say) at the command of the prayer of faith;

faith ; and in this respect, as it were, under the power of his people ; *as Princes, they have power with GOD, and prevail.* Though they may be private persons, their prayers are put up in the name of a Mediator, that is a public person, being the head of the whole Church, and the Lord of the Universe : And if they have a great sense of the importance of eternal things, and concern for the souls of men, though they are not Preachers, they may go in their earnestness and agonies of soul, and pour out their souls before one that is able to do all things. They have a great High-Priest, through whom they may come boldly at all times, and may vent themselves before the GOD that heareth prayer.

If the people of GOD, instead of spending time in fruitless disputing, and talking about opposers, and animadverting upon the unreasonableness of their talk and behaviour, would be more silent in this way, and open their mouths much before GOD, they would be more in the way of a blessing. And if some, that have been complaining of their Ministers, had said and acted less before men, and had applied themselves with all their might to cry to GOD for their Ministers, had as it were risen and stormed heaven with their incessant prayers for them, they would have been much more in the way of success.

GOD in his Providence appearing in the present state of things, does especially call on his people, to be very much in praying to him for the pouring out of the Spirit upon Ministers in the land. For though it is not for us to determine concerning particular Ministers, how much they have of the Spirit of GOD ; yet in the general it is apparent, there is, at this day, need of very great degrees of the presence of GOD with the Ministry, much greater degrees of it than have hitherto been granted, for themselves, and for the Church of GOD.

Such a method of keeping a fast as *this*, has several times been proved, viz. in the forenoon, after the duties of the family and closet, as early as might be, all the people of the congregation have gathered in their particular religious Societies ; companies of men by

themselves, and companies of women by themselves; young men by themselves, and young women by themselves; and companies of children, in all parts of the town, by themselves, as many as were capable of social religious exercises; the boys by themselves: and girls by themselves: And about the middle of the day, at an appointed hour, all have met together in the house of God, to offer up public prayers, and to hear a sermon suitable to the occasion: And then, they have retired from the house of God again into their private Societies, and spent the remaining part of the day in praying together there, excepting so much as was requisite for the duties of the family and closet in their own houses. — And it has been found to be of great benefit to assist and engage the minds of the people in the duties of the day.

12. One thing more I would mention concerning fasting and prayer, wherein I think there has been a neglect in Ministers; and that is, that although they much insist on the duty of secret prayer in their preaching, yet little is said about secret fasting. It is a duty recommended by our Saviour to his followers, just in like manner as secret prayer is. Though I do not suppose that secret fasting is to be practised in a stated manner, as secret prayer; yet it seems to me, it is a duty that all Christians should practise, and frequently practise. There are many occasions, of both a spiritual and temporal nature, that properly require it; and there are many particular mercies, that we desire for ourselves or friends, which it would be proper in this manner to seek of God.

Another thing I would mention, which is of still greater importance, and that is the duty that is incumbent upon God's people, to take heed, that while they abound in external duties of devotion, such as praying, hearing, singing, there be a proportionable care to abound in *Moral Duties*, such as acts of righteousness, truth, meekness, forgiveness, and love towards our neighbour; which are of much greater importance in the sight of God than all the externals of his worship: This, our Saviour was particularly careful that men should be well aware of, Mat. ix. 13. "But go ye,  
and

and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." And, chap. xii. 7. "If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

The internal principles of the worship of God, or the worship of the heart, in the love and fear of God, trust in God, and resignation to God, are the most important of all the duties of Religion; for therein consists the essence of all Religion. But of this inward Religion there are two sorts of external manifestations or expressions: The one sort are outward acts of worship, such as meeting in religious assemblies, attending outward institutions, and honouring God with gestures, as bowing, or kneeling before him, or with words, in speaking honourably of him, in prayer, praise, or religious conference: The other sort are the expressions of our love to God, by obeying his moral commands, of self-denial, righteousness, meekness, and christian love, in our behaviour among men. And the latter are of vastly the greatest importance in the christian life; God makes little account of the former, in comparison of them; they are abundantly more insisted on by the Prophets in the Old Testament, and Christ and his Apostles in the New. When these two kinds of duties are spoken of together, the latter are evermore greatly preferred; Isa. i. 12, to the 18th. and Amos v. 21, &c. Mic. vi. 7, 8. Isa. lviii. 5, 6, 7. Zech. vii. ten first verses. Jer. ii. seven first verses. Mat. xv. 3, &c. Often, when the times were very corrupt in Israel, the people abounded in the former kind of duties, but were at such times always notoriously deficient in the latter; as the Prophets complain, Isa. lviii. four first verses, Jer. vi. 13, compared with ver. 20. Hypocrites and self-righteous persons do much more commonly abound in the former kind of duties than the latter; as Christ remarks of the Pharisees, Mat. xxiii. 14. 25. and 34. When the Scripture directs us to *shew our faith by our works*, it is principally the latter sort are intended; James ii. from ver. 8. to the end, 1 John 2d chap. ver. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. And we are to be judged, at the last day, especially by these latter sort of works; as is evident by the account



we have of the day of judgment in the 25th of Matth. External acts of worship, in words and gestures, and outward forms, are of little use, but as they are a profession of inward worship: They are not so properly shewing our Religion by our deeds; they are only a shewing our Religion by words, or outward profession. But he that shows Religion in the other sort of duties, shews it in something more than a profession of words, he shews it in deeds. And though deeds may be hypocritical, as well as words; yet in themselves they are of greater importance, for they are much more profitable to ourselves and our neighbour. We cannot express our love to God by doing any thing that is profitable to God; God would therefore have us do it in those things that are profitable to our neighbours, whom he has constituted his receivers: Our goodness extends not to God, but to our fellow christians. The latter sort of duties put greater honour upon God, because there is greater self-denial in them. The external acts of worship, consisting in bodily gestures, words and sounds, are the cheapest part of Religion, and least contrary to our lusts. The difficulty of thorough external Religion, does not lie in them. Let wicked men enjoy their covetousness, their pride, their malice, envy and revenge, their sensuality and voluptuousness, amongst men, and they will be willing to compound the matter with God, and submit to what forms of worship you please, and as many as you please; as is manifest in the Jews of old, the Pharisees in Christ's time, and the Papists and Mahometans at this day.

At a time when there is an appearance of the approach of any glorious revival of God's church, God does especially call his people to the practice of moral duties. "Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed," Isa. lvi. 1. So when John preached that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand," and cried to the people, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths strait," as we have an account, Luke iii. 4. the people asked him, "What they should do?" He answers, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let

let him do likewise." The Publicans said, "What shall we do?" He answers, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." And the soldiers asked him, "What shall we do?" He replies, "Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages," ver. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

13. God's people, at such a time as this, ought especially to abound in deeds of charity, or alms-giving. We generally, in these days, seem to fall far below the true spirit and practice of Christianity with regard to this duty. — At a time when God is so liberal of spiritual things, we ought not to be sparing of our temporal things. — So far as I can judge by the Scripture, there is no external duty whatsoever, by which persons will be so much in the way, not only of receiving temporal benefits, but also spiritual blessings, the influences of God's Holy Spirit in the heart, in divine discoveries, and spiritual consolations. I think it would be unreasonable to understand those promises made to this duty, in the 58th chapter of Isaiah, in a sense exclusive of spiritual discoveries and comforts; "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am: If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not." Isa. lviii. 7, &c. So, that giving to the poor is the way to receive spiritual blessings, is manifest by Psal. cxii. 4, &c. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall

shall not be moved for ever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour."

14. Some may object, that for persons to do deeds of charity, in hope of obtaining spiritual blessings, would seem to shew a self-righteous spirit, as though they would offer something to God to purchase these favours. But if this be a good objection, it may be made against every duty whatsoever. All external duties of the first table will be excluded by it, as well as those of the second. These have as direct a tendency to raise self-righteous person's expectations of receiving something from God, on account of them, as those; and on some accounts more, for these duties are more immediately offered to GOD, and therefore persons are more ready to expect something from GOD for them. But no duty is to be neglected, for fear of making a righteousness of it. And I have always observed, those that are most exact in external duties of the first table, and slack as to those of the second, are the most self-righteous.

If God's people in this land were once brought to abound in such deeds of love, as much as in praying, hearing, singing, and religious meetings and conference, it would be a most blessed omen: There is nothing would have a greater tendency to bring the God of love down from heaven; so amiable would be the sight in the eyes of our loving and exalted Redeemer, that it would soon as it were fetch him down from his throne, to set up his tabernacle with men. I do not remember ever to have read of any remarkable pouring out of the Spirit, that continued any long time, but what was attended with an abounding of this duty. So we know it was in the Apostle's days: And so in the late remarkable Revival of Religion in Saxony, which began by the labours of the famous Professor Franck, and has now been carried on for above thirty years, and has spread its happy influences into many parts of the world; it was begun, and has been carried on, by a wonderful practice

practice of this duty. And it is foretold, that God's people shall abound in this duty, in the time of the great effusion of the Spirit in the latter days; *The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. — But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.*

Thus I have (by the help of God) finished what was proposed. I have taken the more pains in it, because it appears to me that now God is giving us the most happy season to attempt an universal reformation that ever was given in New-England. And it is a thousand pities, that we should fail of that which would be so glorious, for want of being sensible of our opportunity, or being aware of those things that tend to hinder it, or by taking improper courses to obtain it, or not being sensible in what way God expects we should seek it. If it should please God to bleis any means for the convincing the country of his hand in this work, and bringing them fully and freely to acknowledge his glorious power and grace in it, and engage with one heart and soul, and by due methods to endeavour to promote it, it would be a dispensation of Divine Providence that would have a most glorious aspect, happily signifying the approach of great and glorious things to the Church of God, and justly causing us to hope that Christ would speedily come to set up his kingdom of light, holiness, peace and joy on earth, as is foretold in his word. Amen; even so: Come, Lord Jesus!

K I N I S.



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